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Jules Girardet

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Procédé Goupil

Scenes from Private Life

LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE

OF

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

TRANSLATED BY

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

MEMOIRS OF TWO YOUNG MARRIED WOMEN

ALBERT SAVARUS

NEW YORK
THE ATHENAEUM SOCIETY

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TO GEORGE SAND.

This dedication, dear George, can add nothing to the glory of your name, which will cast its magic lustre on my book; but in making it there is neither modesty nor self-interest on my part. I desire to bear testimony to the true friendship between us; which continues unchanged in spite of travels and absence, — in spite, too, of our mutual hard work and the maliciousness of the world. This feeling will doubtless never change. The procession of friendly names which accompany my books mingle pleasure with the pain and toil their great number causes me; for they are not written without pain and difficulty, to say nothing of the reproach now cast upon me for what is called my alarming fecundity, — as if the world which poses before me were not more fecund still! Would it not be a fine thing, George, if some antiquary of long past literatures should find in that procession none but noble names, true hearts, pure and sacred friendships, — the glories of this century? Ought I not to show myself prouder of that great and certain happiness than of other successes which are not indisputable? To one who knows you well it must ever be a great happiness to be allowed to call himself, as I do here,

Your friend,

De Balzac.

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MEMOIRS

OF

TWO YOUNG MARRIED WOMEN.

FIRST PART.

I.

LOUISE DE CHAULIEU TO RENÉE DE MAUCOMBE.

PARIS, September.

MY DEAR DARLING, — I am out of school, too! and as you did not write me at Blois, it is for me to begin our charming correspondence. But there is nothing in this letter to make your beautiful black eyes sparkle; keep your exclamations for the one in which I shall confide to you my first love. People always talk of a first love; can there be a second? "Hush!" I hear you say; "instead of that, tell me how it is you have left the convent, where, when we parted, you expected to profess."

My dear, though the miracle of my deliverance did happen at the Carmelites, it was really the most natural

thing in the world. The qualms of a frightened conscience carried the day over the commands of inflexible family policy, that 's all. My aunt, who did not wish to see me die of consumption, conquered my mother, who had so long prescribed the novitiate as the only cure for that malady. The black melancholy which took possession of me after you left the convent hastened this happy escape.

So, here I am in Paris, my angel; and I owe to you the happiness of being here. My Renée, if you could but have seen me the first day I had to live without you, you would certainly feel proud to have inspired such deep sentiments in your friend's heart. We have so long dreamed together, we have spread our wings and imagined life so often, that our souls seem welded together, like those of the Hungarian sisters; you remember that story told us by Monsieur Beauvisage? — who certainly was not the man of his name! Was ever a convent doctor better chosen?

Have you been ill, my treasure, in order to keep your dear one company? In the dark depression our parting caused me I recognized, more than ever, the ties that unite us. I thought them severed by separation; I was seized with disgust for life, like some poor, lonely turtle-dove; I felt how sweet it would be to die, and I *was* dying, softly. To be alone in the Carmelite convent, a prey to the dread of having to profess with-

out tasting life like Mademoiselle de la Vallière, and without my Renée! oh, it was illness, mortal illness! That monotonous life — every hour bringing a duty, a prayer, a toil, all so precisely alike that one knows at any moment exactly what a Carmelite sister is doing the world over — that horrible life in which one grows indifferent as to whether the things about us are or are *not*, had become for you and me a varied world; our minds had no trammels, fancy bestowed upon us the key of her kingdoms. We were charming hippogriffs, mounting each other in turn, the lively one waking up the sleepy one, till our spirits frolicked together in the unknown, forbidden world. Even that dreary book, the "Lives of the Saints" helped us to understand many hidden things. But the day your dear company was torn away from me I became a Carmelite indeed, — that is, a modern Danaïde, who, instead of trying to fill a vessel full of holes, draws every day from some deep well an empty bucket, hoping to find it full. My aunt was totally ignorant of our inward life. She could not understand my disgust for existence; she believed the two acres of her convent ground a celestial paradise. The life of a nun, my darling, cannot be accepted at our age by any girl unless she has more simplicity of nature than belongs to you or me, or else that ardor of devotion which makes my aunt so sublime a creature. My aunt sacrificed herself to a beloved brother; but

how can any one sacrifice herself to unknown beings and ideas?

For the last two weeks I have buried so many wild meditations and speeches in my heart, I have had so many thoughts and experiences to tell that could only be told to you, that I truly think I should choke to death were it not for these written confidences which are now to take the place of our precious talks. Ah! how necessary the life of the heart is to us! I begin my journal this morning, imagining that yours is beginning for me at the same time, and that I shall before long live in your beautiful valley of Gémenos, of which I know nothing except what you have told me, just as you are going to live in Paris, of which you know nothing except what we have dreamed together and what I am going to tell you.

So, my dearest, on a beautiful morning marked with a rose-colored letter in my book of life, there arrived from Paris my mother's *dame de compagnie* and Philippe, my grandmother's footman, sent to take me home. When my aunt summoned me to her room, and told me this news I was speechless with joy; I looked at her stupidly.

"My child," she said, in her guttural tones, "you leave me without regret, I see that; but this is not a final farewell; we shall see you here again. God has marked your brow with the sign of his elect; you have

the pride that leads to heaven or hell, but you have also too much nobility of soul to fall to hell. I know you better than you know yourself. Passion will never be in you what it is in ordinary women."

She drew me gently to her, and kissed me on the forehead with that fire which consumes her, which blackens the azure of her eyes, droops her eyelids, furrows her ivory forehead, and discolors her lovely face. She made my flesh creep. Before replying, I kissed her hands.

"Dear aunt," I said, "if your adorable kindness has not made your Paraclete healthy to my body or sweet to my soul, I shall have to weep so many tears to force me back that I feel sure you will neither hope nor pray for my return. I shall never return, unless betrayed by my king — if I meet with one; and if I do, death alone can tear him from me; I fear no Montespan."

"Silly girl," she said smiling, "don't leave those ideas behind you; carry them away with you; and let me tell you that you are much more of a Montespan than a La Vallière."

I kissed her. The poor woman could not keep from following me to the carriage, where her eyes were as much fixed on the family armorial bearings as on me.

Night overtook me at Beaugency, still plunged in a sort of moral torpor brought on by this singular farewell. What was I really about to find in this world so much desired?

In the first place, no one was at home to receive me; all my heart preparations were wasted. My mother was driving in the Bois de Boulogne; my father was attending a council of ministers; my brother, the Duc de Rhétoré, never came home, they told me, till it was time to dress for dinner. Mademoiselle Griffith (good name, she certainly has claws) and Philippe conducted me to my apartment.

This apartment is the one that used to belong to my grandmother, the Princesse de Vaurémont, who left me a fortune as to which nobody has ever said a word to me. You will understand the sadness that overcame me on entering these rooms so full of my childish memories of that dear creature. The apartment is just as she left it; I was to sleep in the bed she died on. Sitting on the edge of her sofa, I wept without observing that I was not alone; I thought only of how often I had knelt at that very place to listen to her. I could see her face, swathed in rare old lace, and shrunken with the sufferings of her last illness. The room seemed to me still warm from the heated temperature in which she always kept it.

Why was it that I, Armande-Louise-Marie de Chaulieu was obliged, like any peasant girl, to sleep in the bed of her grandmother almost on the day of the latter's death? — for I chose to fancy that the princess, who really died in 1817, had expired the night before.

The room contained many things which ought not to have been there; which proves that persons who are busy with state affairs do not attend to matters in their own home; and it also proves that as soon as the princess was dead no one thought any longer of that noble woman, who will always remain one of the grand female figures of the eighteenth century.

Philippe, her footman, seemed to understand, in a way, why I wept. He told me that the princess had bequeathed to me all her furniture and other belongings. My father had left the grand apartments in the condition to which the Revolution had reduced them. Remembering this, I rose and asked Philippe to open the door of the little salon which leads to the reception-rooms, and there I beheld the dilapidation which I remembered of old. The niches above the doors, which once contained fine pictures, were still empty, the marbles broken the mirrors taken away. In my childish days I used to be afraid to go up the grand staircase and cross the vast solitude of these high rooms, so that I usually went to the princess's apartments by the little staircase which led to the private door of her dressing-room.

Her apartment (the one that is now mine) consisting of a salon, one bedchamber, and the pretty dressing-room in scarlet and gold I told you about, is in the corner tower nearest to the Invalides. The house is separated from the boulevard by a wall covered with

climbing plants, which mingle their shoots with the foliage of the elms on the roadway. If it were not for the blue and gold dome and the gray walls of the Invalides, I might fancy myself living in a forest. The style of these three rooms proves them to be the former state apartments of the duchesses de Chaulieu; those of the dukes must have been in the tower at the other corner of the building, separated from each other by the main body of the house and the middle tower, in which are those vast, gloomy, and sonorous salons I mentioned just now, shorn of all their splendor, and the terror of my childhood.

Philippe put on a very confidential air on seeing my astonishment. My dear, in this diplomatic mansion even the servants are discreet and mysterious. He told me, under his breath, that they expected to pass a law by which the *émigrés* would recover the value of their lost property. My father is therefore postponing the restoration of the house until this restitution takes place. The king's architect estimates the cost at three hundred thousand francs. This confidential communication made me drop upon the sofa in my salon. So! my father, instead of employing that sum in marrying me, preferred to shut me up in a convent! That was the reflection which came to me on the threshold of my home life. Ah! Renée, how often I have told you, with my head on your shoulder, of the happy days

when my grandmother occupied these rooms. She exists only in my heart, and you are at Maucombe, five hundred miles away from me, — the only two beings who loved or have ever loved me! That dear old woman with a young heart always waked up when she heard my voice. We understood each other so well.

That recollection suddenly changed all my first impressions. I felt there was something sacred in what, at first, had seemed to me like profanation. I even thought it sweet to inhale the vague perfume of maréchale powder which lingers here, sweet to sleep under these curtains of gold-colored damask with white figures, where her eyes and her breath must have left something of her dear soul. I told Philippe to polish and restore the lustre of the furniture and to make the whole apartment habitable. I arranged the rooms to suit myself, giving to each piece of furniture its proper place. In taking possession I looked carefully over everything to see how best I could preserve these precious antiquities, which I love. Do you want to know what the rooms are like? The chamber is all in white, a little yellowed by time, and the gold of the frolicking arabesques is somewhat tarnished from the same cause; but these effects are in harmony with the faded colors of the Savonnerie carpet, given to my grandmother by Louis XV., who also gave her his portrait. The clock on the chimney-piece was a

present from the Maréchal de Saxe, and the porcelain ornaments beside it from the Maréchal de Richelieu. A portrait of my grandmother, taken when she was twenty-five, and now in an oval frame, hangs opposite to that of the king. The prince is not there. . I like this frank neglect, without hypocrisy, which paints at one stroke her remarkable character. Once when she was very ill her confessor insisted that the prince, who was waiting at the door, should be allowed to enter. "Very well," she said, "with the doctor and his pills."

The bedstead is a four-poster with fluted canopy; the curtains are draped back in folds of splendid amplitude; the furniture is all of gilded wood, covered in yellow damask with white designs; the window-curtains are of the same material, lined with white silk of a kind which resembles *moire*. The panels above the doors are painted artistically, but I do not know by whom; one represents a sunrise, the other a brilliant moonlight. The fireplace is treated very curiously. It explains how in the last century they sat, literally, in the chimney corner. There the great events of the family took place. The brass fireplace is a marvel of modelling, the mantel of exquisite finish, the shovels and tongs of the finest workmanship, and the bellows delicious. The tapestry that covers the screen comes from the Gobelins, and is beautifully mounted; the fairy figures carved along the frame and on the fret

and bar are ravishing, — the workmanship as delicate as that on a fan. I wonder who gave her that dainty bit of furniture of which she was so fond; I wish I knew. How many times I have seen her with her feet on the bar, buried in her reclining chair, her dress raised nearly to her knees, taking up her snuffbox, replacing it, and taking it again from the little table on which it always stood between her box of pastilles and her silk mittens. How dainty she was! To the day of her death she took as much care of her person as she did when that beautiful portrait was made of her, and the flower of the king's court pressed around her. That reclining-chair, as I look at it now, reminds me of the inimitable movement she gave to her skirts when she threw herself into it. The women of her day have carried off with them certain secrets which painted their epoch. The princess had a turn of her head, a way of casting her words and looks about her, a peculiar language of her own, which have not descended to my mother. There was artifice and diplomacy in it all; at the same time kindliness, and design without a plot. Her conversation was prolix and yet laconic; she told a story well, and could paint an effect in three words. Above all, she had a freedom of judgment which has certainly influenced the cast of my mind.

From the time I was seven till I was ten years old I lived, as they say, in her pocket. She loved to have

me with her as much as I loved to be there. This liking was the cause of more than one quarrel between her and my mother. Now, nothing fans the flame of a sentiment as much as the cold wind of disapproval. With what a charm she used to say to me: "Ah! here you are, little mischief!" when that eel, curiosity, had lent me its motions to slip into her room. She knew I loved her, and she loved my childish love, which was like a sun-ray to her winter.

I don't know what went on in her rooms at night, but she received a great deal of company. When I crept on tiptoe in the mornings to see if her window shutters were opened, I found the furniture in the salon all out of place, the card-tables in confusion, and a great deal of tobacco scattered about.

This salon is in the same style as the bed-chamber. The furniture is curiously turned; the woodwork has hollow mouldings *à pieds de biche.* Garlands of flowers, richly carved and very graceful, twine about the mirror frames and fall in festoons over the glass. Two beautiful Chinese vases are on the pier-tables. The chief tone of the whole arrangement is scarlet and white. My grandmother was a glowing and piquante brunette, as you can easily guess from her choice of colors.

I have found a writing-table in this salon which used to take my fancy as a child; it is inlaid with

silver, chased and embossed, and was made for her by a man named Lommellini, of Genoa. Each side of this table represents the occupations of one of the four seasons; the figures are in relief, and there are hundreds in each division. I have spent two hours all alone, picking up my recollections, one after the other, in this sanctuary where one of the most celebrated women of Louis XV.'s court (at which all the women were celebrated for their wit or their beauty) lived and died. You know how suddenly and harshly they separated me from her in 1816.

"Go and say good-bye to your grandmother," my mother said to me one morning.

I ran to the princess; she was not surprised at my departure and seemed indifferent to it; her manner was the same as usual.

"You are going to the convent, my treasure," she said. "You will see your aunt, — an excellent woman. I shall take care that you are not sacrificed; you shall be independent, and able to marry whom you please."

She died six months later, after confiding her will to the most assiduous of her many old friends, the Prince de Talleyrand, who once, when making a visit to Mademoiselle de Chargebœuf, took occasion to tell me that my grandmother forbade me to take the vows. I hope that sooner or later I may meet the prince, and then, I dare say, he will tell me more of what she said.

So you see, my darling, that although I found no one to receive me, I have consoled myself with the shade of the dear old princess. And I have also begun the fulfilment of our mutual agreement; which was, you remember, to tell each other the most trifling events of our lives and surroundings. It is so sweet to know where and how our dear ones live! Tell me everything — the least little things that happen around you, even to the sunset lights among the trees.

October 1.

I arrived here about half-past three in the afternoon. At half-past five Rose informed me that my mother had come in, and I went down at once to pay my respects. My mother occupies on the ground-floor an apartment which is arranged exactly like mine; both are in the corner tower, or pavilion. I am just above her and we both have the same private staircase. My father is in the pavilion at the other corner of the house; but as, at that end, there is a great deal of space which at ours is occupied by the grand staircase, his apartment is very much larger than either of ours.

Notwithstanding the duties of their position now laid upon them by the return of the Bourbons, my father and mother continue to live on the ground-floor, where there is plenty of room for the reception of guests, — so vast are the houses that our forefathers built.

I found my mother in her salon, where nothing had been changed. She was dressed for the evening. As I went down step by step, I kept asking myself how she would treat me — she who was so little of a mother to me that in all the eight years I had been in the convent she had written me but the two letters I showed you. Thinking it would be very false in me to pretend to an impossible tenderness, I made myself a kind of dutiful idiot, and entered her presence much embarrassed inwardly. But the embarrassment was soon over. My mother received me charmingly; she put on no false tenderness; neither was she cold; she did not treat me as a stranger, nor did she press me to her bosom as a long-lost daughter; she behaved exactly as if she had seen me the evening before, and felt to me as the kindest and sincerest of friends; she addressed me as if I were a grown woman, and kissed me on the forehead.

"My dear girl," she said, "if you were really dying in the convent it is, of course, better that you should live here with us. You disarrange your father's plans and mine; but the day has passed when children obeyed their parents blindly. Monsieur de Chaulieu's intention, which agrees with mine, is to neglect no means of making life agreeable to you and letting you see much of the world. At your age I should have felt as you do; therefore, of course, I cannot be angry with you; you could not understand what it was we wanted of

you. You will not find me absurdly severe. If you have doubted my heart toward you, you will soon find that you were mistaken. Though I wish to leave you at perfect liberty I think you will do wisely to listen, at first, to the counsels of a mother who intends to be a sister to you."

The duchess spoke in a gentle voice, arranging my pelerine as she did so. She fascinated me. At thirty-eight she is as beautiful as an angel. Her eyes are blue and black, the lashes silky, the forehead without a line, the complexion so perfect that a stranger might think she painted. Her shoulders and throat are marvellous; her waist as slender and flexible as yours; her hands are of rare beauty, white as milk, — the nails sparkle in the light, so polished are they; the little finger stands out a trifle from the rest, and the thumb is like ivory. Her foot is the equal of her hand; it is the Spanish foot of a Demoiselle de Vandenesse. If she is as lovely as this when nearly forty, she will still be a beautiful woman at sixty.

I answered her, my darling, like a good, submissive daughter. I was to her what she was to me; in fact, I was even better, for her beauty conquered me; I forgave her neglect. I began to see how such a woman was inevitably carried away by her rôle of queen. I told her so as candidly as I might have said it to you. Perhaps she did not expect to hear words of love from

the lips of her daughter. The sincere homage of my admiration seemed to touch her; her manner changed and became more winning than before. "You are a good girl," she said, "and I hope we shall always be friends." That speech seemed to me adorably naïve; but I took care not to show her that I thought so, — for I had instantly perceived that I must let her think herself much cleverer and more astute than her daughter. So I made myself a mere silly girl, and she was delighted with me. I kissed her hands a great many times, and told her how glad I was she treated me as she did. I felt so much at my ease with her that I even told her of my fears. She smiled and drew me to her by my neck and kissed me on the forehead very tenderly. "Dear child," she said, "we have company to dinner to-day, and I dare say you will agree with me that you had better wait till the dress-maker has properly arrayed you before you make your entrance into the great world. So, after you have seen your father and your brother, you will return to your own apartments." I agreed to that very heartily. My mother's enchanting toilet was a first revelation to the eye of that social world of our dreams, — yours and mine. My father presently came in. "Monsieur, this is your daughter," said the duchess.

My father's manner to me was very tender; he played his part of father so perfectly that I thought it

was sincere. "So here you are, my rebellious daughter!" he said, taking both my hands in his and kissing them with more of gallantry than paternity. Then he drew me toward him, passed his arm about my waist, and kissed me on the forehead and both cheeks. "You must atone for the injury your change of vocation is to the family by the pleasure your success in society will give us. You see, madame, that she will soon be a very pretty girl, of whom you may well feel proud. Here is your brother Rhétoré. Alphonse," he said to a handsome young man who now came in, "this is your sister, the nun, who cannot be persuaded to wear the habit."

My brother lounged up to me and shook my hand. "Why, kiss her!" said the duke. Then he kissed me on both cheeks. "I am delighted to see you, sister," he said, "and I am on your side against my father." I thanked him; but all the same I think he might have stopped in Blois to see me when he was on his way to Orléans to visit our brother, the marquis, in garrison. I now withdrew, fearing the company might arrive. I have made a few changes in my rooms, and have laid out on the scarlet velvet of my table all that I need for my letters to you, thinking meantime of the novelties of my position.

And now I have told you, my dear white darling, exactly, neither more nor less, how things have hap-

pened to me, a girl of eighteen, who has returned after an absence of nine years to the bosom of one of the most illustrious families in the kingdom. The journey had tired me; also the emotions of this return; so I went to bed, as we did in the convent, at eight o'clock, directly after supper. They have even given me the little Dresden china service the dear princess always used when the fancy took her to dine alone in her apartment.

II.

SAME TO SAME.

November 25.

The next morning I found my apartments put in order by old Philippe, who had even filled the vases with flowers. In short, I am fairly installed. The only trouble was that no one remembered that a Carmelite novice was sure to be hungry at an early hour, and Rose had much trouble to get me some breakfast, "Mademoiselle went to bed just as dinner was served, and she got up this morning just as monseigneur was coming home for the night," she said.

About one o'clock my father knocked at the door of my little salon and asked if I could receive him. I opened the door; he came in and saw that I was writing. "My dear," he said, "you will wish to dress

suitably, and also to make yourself thoroughly comfortable in these rooms; you will therefore find twelve thousand francs in this purse. That is one year's allowance, which I advance to you for that purpose. You can arrange with your mother to find another companion if Miss Griffith does not suit you; for Madame de Chaulieu will not, of course, have time to be with you in the mornings. You will have a carriage at your orders, and a footman." "May I keep Philippe?" I asked. "Certainly," he replied. "Do not feel at all uneasy about money; your own fortune is large enough to keep you from being any expense to your mother or me." "Should I be very indiscreet if I asked to be told how large my fortune is?" I said. "Certainly not, my child," he answered. "Your grandmother left you five hundred thousand francs, the amount of her savings; for she would not deprive her family of a single inch of land. That sum is invested in the Funds. The accumulation of interest added to it now produces about forty thousand francs a year. I wished to employ that money in making a fortune for your second brother; therefore by refusing to become a nun you have upset all my plans; but perhaps you will concur in them later. I shall expect great things of you. You seem to me much more reasonable than I anticipated. I need not tell you how a Demoiselle de Chaulieu is expected to conduct herself; the pride I see in

your features is my surest guarantee. In our family the precautions lesser persons take about their daughters would be insulting to us. Mere gossip on your account would cost the life of whoever presumed to utter it, or that of one of your brothers if fate were unjust to them. That is all I need say to you on that head. Adieu, my dear little girl." Then he kissed me on the forehead and departed.

After persevering for nine years in this plan of giving my money to my second brother, I can't explain to myself why it should suddenly be abandoned. My father certainly spoke out frankly, in a way I like. There was no ambiguity in what he said. My property was about to be given to his son the marquis. Who has had bowels of compassion for me? Is it my mother? or my father? or my brother?

I remained seated on my grandmother's sofa, with my eyes fixed on the purse my father had laid on the mantel-piece, pleased and yet displeased by this attention, which fixed my mind on the question of money. It is true I need not think about it any longer; my doubts are solved; and there is something dignified in sparing my pride any suffering on that account.

Philippe was busy all day in going from one shop to another to produce my metamorphosis. A celebrated dress-maker named Victorine arrived; also a linen-maker and a shoe-maker. I am as eager as a child to

know what I shall look like when I emerge from the *sacks* of our conventual garments. But all these work-people require such an amount of time! The corset-maker insists on eight days, unless I mean to ruin my figure. That sounds serious; so I have "a figure," have I! Janssen, the opera shoe-maker, assured me positively that I had "my mother's foot."

I spent the whole morning in these important occupations. A glove-maker took the measure of my hand. The linen-maker came for my orders. At my dinner-time (which was that of the family breakfast) my mother informed me that we would go together to a milliner for my hats and bonnets, — so as to form my taste, and show me how to order for myself in future. I'm as giddy from this beginning of independence as a blind man must be when he gets his sight. I can judge now what a Carmelite is to a girl in society; the difference is so great that you and I never had the faintest conception of it.

During breakfast my father seemed absent-minded, and we left him to his thoughts; he is intrusted with many of the king's secrets. I was completely forgotten; but he will remember me whenever I can be useful to him — I saw that. My father is an attractive man, in spite of his fifty years. His figure is youthful and well-made; he is fair; his whole bearing is exquisitely graceful; his face has the speaking and yet mute expression

of a diplomatist's; his nose is thin and long; his eyes are brown. What a handsome couple they are! How many strange thoughts crowded into my mind as I saw clearly that these two beings, equally noble, rich, and superior, had nothing in common but their name; had no life together, and were merely united conventionally in the eyes of the world!

The élite of the court and the diplomatic circles were here last night. A few weeks hence I am to go to a ball given by the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, and be presented to the great world I want so much to know. A dancing-master is to come every morning, and I must learn to dance in a month, under pain of not going to the ball. Before dinner my mother had a talk with me about the governess, or companion. I said I would keep Miss Griffith, who was recommended to her by the Austrian ambassador. She is the daughter of a clergyman, and well brought up; her mother was a woman of rank; she is thirty-six years old, and will teach me English. The Griffith is still good-looking enough to have certain pretensions; she is poor and proud and Scotch; she is to be my chaperone, and will sleep with Rose; Rose is under her orders. I saw at once that I could govern my governess. During the six days that we have now been together she has found out that I alone take an interest in her; and I have just as thoroughly understood, in spite of her marble face, that

she will be very complying to me. I think she is a kind creature, though terribly discreet. I have not been able to find out what has passed between herself and my mother.

Here 's another thing which seems of no great consequence. My father has declined the ministry which was offered to him. It was that which made him so absent-minded last night. He says he prefers an embassy to endless discussions on public affairs. He wants Spain. I heard all this at breakfast, — the only moment of the day when my father, mother, and brother see each other with any sort of intimacy. The servants only come in when rung for. The rest of the time my brother, like my father, is out of the house. My mother dresses; she is never visible between two and four o'clock. At four she goes out for an hour's drive; she receives from six to seven when she does not dine out; and her evenings are spent in some kind of pleasure, — the theatre, balls, concerts, visits. In fact, her life is so full I don't believe she ever has a quarter of an hour to herself. She must spend a good deal of time on her toilet in the mornings, for she is divinely beautiful at breakfast, which is served between eleven and twelve o'clock. I begin to understand the sounds I hear in her apartments, which are below mine. She takes an almost cold bath when she rises, and a cup of coffee, cold, with cream; then she dresses. She is

never awake before nine, except under extraordinary circumstances. In summer she goes out early on horseback. At two o'clock she receives a young man whom I have not yet seen.

That 's our family life. We meet at breakfast and dinner, though sometimes my mother and I take the latter meal alone; and I fancy I shall often have to dine in my own apartment with Miss Griffith, like the princess, for my mother has many invitations to dinner. I no longer wonder at the little interest my family have taken in me. My dear, in Paris there is a sort of heroism in loving those who belong to us, for we don't belong to ourselves. And how easy to forget the absent in the whirl of such a life. I see that, and yet I have not set foot out of doors and know nothing of it; I shall wait till I am less of a rustic and my dress and manner are more in keeping with this great world, whose rush amazes me though I only hear the echo of it from afar. Up to this time I have not been beyond the garden.

The Italian opera begins in a few days; my mother has a box. I am crazy to hear Italian music and to see French opera. I am beginning to shake off convent habits and am learning those of the great world. I am writing to you just before going to bed; and my bedtime is now as late as ten o'clock, the hour when my mother goes out, — unless, to be sure, she goes to some

theatre. Just think, there are twelve theatres in Paris! I read a good deal, but in a desultory way; my ignorance is crass. One book leads to another. I find the titles of several books on the cover of the one I am reading; but I have no one to tell me how to choose, and I find some of them very stupid. All that I have read of modern literature so far turns on love, — the subject you and I used to talk of so much; for is n't our fate made for us by man and for man? But oh! my dearest, how far these writers are beneath the ideas of two little girls named Renée and Louise! My angel! such trivial events, such queer behavior, and then, such mean and paltry expressions of feeling! Still, I have liked two books very much. One is called "Corinne," the other "Adolphe." Apropos of that, I asked my father if I could see Madame de Staël. My mother and father and Alphonse laughed. Alphonse said: "Where does she come from?" My father replied, "From the Carmelites, and we are silly to laugh." "My dear," said the duchess, gently, "Madame de Staël is dead."

"How can a woman be deceived?" I asked Miss Griffith when I finished "Adolphe." "Because she loves," replied Miss Griffith. Renée, do you think a man could deceive either you or me? Miss Griffith has ended by finding out that I am not more than half a fool, and that I really have a hidden education, — that

which you and I gave ourselves by discussing everything in heaven and earth. She sees that my ignorance is chiefly about external things. The poor creature has opened her heart to me. That laconic answer I mentioned above, set in the balance against various imaginable misfortunes, made me quiver. La Griffith warned me not to let myself be dazzled by what I was about to see of the world; to distrust everything, especially that which pleased me most. That 's all she knows, and she can't tell me anything more. It is very monotonous. She is like a bird with one note.

III.

SAME TO SAME.

December.

My treasure, — Here I am, all ready to enter the great world; and I have been as silly as I can be in making ready for it. This morning, after much practising, I beheld myself duly and properly shod, corseted, laced, curled, dressed, and decorated. I was like a duellist before fighting; I practised with closed doors. I wanted to see myself under arms, and I was pleased enough to find I had a little triumphant and vanquishing air, which, I flatter myself, will be all-conquering. I examined and judged myself severely

I reviewed my forces, — putting in practice that fine maxim of antiquity: "Know thyself." I assure you I had much pleasure in making my own acquaintance. Griffith alone was in the secret of this doll's-play. I was doll and child in one. You think you know me? Well, you don't!

Here, Renée, is the portrait of your friend, formerly disguised as a Carmelite and now brought to life as a frivolous and worldly girl. Provence excepted, I am one of the handsomest creatures in France. Take that as the summing up of the present chapter. I have defects; but if I were a man I should fall in love with them. These very defects promise a great deal. When for more than two weeks one has daily admired the exquisite plumpness of a mother's arms, it is rather discouraging to see one's own as thin as sticks; but I console myself by knowing that the wrists are delicate, and the lines so soft that when the flesh fills up the hollows my arms will be as dimpled, round, and satiny as hers. The shoulders follow suit as to thinness; or rather, to tell the truth I have no shoulders, nothing but hard blade-bones which form two flat angularities. My waist has no flexibility, and the hips are rigid. Ouf! there! I've told the worst. On the other hand, this framework is delicate and firm, and health sends a pure, bright glow through the vigorous outlines; the blue blood of life flows in waves beneath a skin that is

almost transparent. Yes, and the fairest daughter of Eve is a negress beside me, and my foot is that of a gazelle, and all the outlines are delicate, and my features are purest Greek! There, mademoiselle! The flesh-tones don't blend very well, that's true; but they are brilliant; I'm a very pretty green fruit, and I have the charm of greenness. In fact, I am like that face in my aunt's old missal, — don't you remember? — which rises from a crimson lily.

To continue, — my blue eyes are not stupid, they are proud; two mother-of-pearl lids with blue veins, fringed with silken lashes, surround them. My forehead is dazzling; and the hair, delightfully planted, is arranged in little waves of pale gold, darker in the masses, showing that I am not a faded, fainting blonde, but a Southern fair one, full of blood, vigorous to act and not be acted on. The hair-dresser wanted to plaster it down in two bandeaux and put a pearl hanging to a gold chain round my forehead, declaring that it would give me a look of the middle-ages! As if I wanted to be of any age but what I am!

My nose is thin, the nostrils well cut and separated by a very pretty pink partition; it is an imperious nose, rather scoffing, and its tip too nervous ever to grow coarse or red. In short, my dear darling, if my perfections are not enough to marry a girl without a dowry, I'm mistaken. As for my ears, they are charm-

ingly modelled; a pearl at each tip looks yellow in them. My throat is long, and has the serpentine movement which gives such majesty; when in shadow it has golden tints. Ah! I do think my mouth is too large, — but it is very expressive; the lips are a fine color, and the teeth smile charmingly! And then, my dear darling, all is in harmony, — carriage and voice and everything! I try to remember how my grandmother swung her petticoats without ever touching them. I know I am handsome and graceful enough to follow my own fancies; I can laugh just as you and I used to laugh, and yet be respected. I can be merry and gay, and yet imposing. I shall know how to lower my eyes, and pretend to an icy heart behind that snowy brow. I can turn that swan-like neck like a melancholy madonna, and the virgins the painters paint will be leagues beneath me; for you know, Renée, I shall be far above them among the stars. When men speak to me they will be forced to modulate their voices.

So, my dear, I am armed at all points, and I can run the gamut of coquetry from bass to treble, from the solemn tones to the flute-like notes. It is an immense advantage not to be too uniform. My mother is neither gay nor virginal; she is exclusively dignified and imposing; she can only come out of that to make herself leonine; when she wounds she does not

know how to heal; but as for me, I 'll wound and heal both. I am totally different from my mother; therefore we cannot clash, — unless we quarrel about the perfection of our feet and hands, which are exactly alike. I take after my father; he is supple and delicate. I have the manners of my grandmother and her tone of voice, — a head-voice when raised, but a melodious chest-voice in a *tête-à-tête*.

Renée! it seems to me as though I had only just left the convent. I am not yet of the world, I am all unknown to it. What a delicious moment! I still belong to myself, — like a flower just blooming and yet unseen. My angel, my darling! as I walk my salon looking at myself in the glass, seeing the innocent, ingenuous cast-off garments of the novice, the schoolgirl, there is something in my heart, — I know not what, — regrets for the past, anxieties for the future, fears of the world, of society, farewells to our white daisies, innocently gathered, carelessly stripped of petals. Ah! there was much in all that, *but* there were also fantastic ideas, which I here and now drive back into the depths of my soul, — where I dare not descend, and from which they came.

My darling, I have an outfit worthy of a bride! All my new possessions are laid in perfumed drawers of cedar-wood in my delightful dressing-room. I have ribbons, gloves, boots, and shoes in profusion. My

father has given me the jewels of a young girl, a work-table, dressing-case, perfume-bottles, fan, parasols, prayer-book, a gold chain, and a cashmere shawl. He promises to have me taught to ride on horseback. I already know how to dance! To-morrow, yes, to-morrow night, I am to make my first appearance. My dress is a gown of white muslin, with a wreath of white roses arranged in the Greek style. I shall assume my *madonna air*, for I want to seem simple-minded and get all the women on my side.

My mother is a thousand leagues from suspecting what I write to you; she thinks me incapable of reflection. My brother honors me with ineffable contempt, and shows me all the kindness of his indifference. He is a fine young man, but whimsical and melancholy. I've detected his secret, though the duke and duchess seem not to know it. Though a duke himself and young, he is jealous of his father; he feels he is nobody in the State; he has no position at court; he can't say, "I am going to the Chamber." Yes, I have guessed his secret, but then, to be sure, I am the only one at home who has sixteen hours daily for reflection. My father is deep in public business and pleasures; my mother just as busy with society; no one reacts upon me in the household, for they are always out; they don't seem to have time enough to live. I'm exceedingly curious to know what invincible attraction there

can be in social life to keep people out of their homes till two or three in the mornings, and compel them to take such trouble and endure such fatigue.

When I longed so much to come here, I never imagined such household estrangement or such intoxicating occupations. Now I know that members of a family may live together and not know each other. A girl who is half a nun arrives, and in two weeks she discovers more than the statesman himself knows of his own household. Perhaps he does see it, though, and pretends to this paternal blindness; that 's another mystery to clear up.

IV.

SAME TO SAME.

December 15.

Yesterday, at two o'clock, I went to drive in the Champs-Élysées and the Bois de Boulogne, on one of those glorious autumn days you and I have so often enjoyed on the banks of the Loire. I then saw Paris for the first time. The whole scene of the place Louis XV. is truly glorious, but the glory is of man's making. I was well-dressed, demure, though inclined to laugh, with a calm face under a pretty bonnet, and my hands folded. No one smiled at me, and not the smallest

little man stood thunderstruck on his legs or even turned round at sight of me; and yet the carriage moved along with a slowness quite in keeping with my dignified pose. Stay! I'm mistaken; a charming duke did pass and turn his horse round abruptly; and that man, who thus saved my vanity, was my own father, whose pride, as he told me, was much flattered by my appearance.

I also met my mother, who sent me a pretty greeting, like a kiss, with the tips of her fingers. The Griffith, who was quite unconcerned, gazed about her on all sides; for my part, I think a young woman ought always to know where she looks. One man stared at my carriage, but not at me; he may have been a carriage-maker. I think I deceived myself as to the value of my charms; beauty, that rare privilege given by God only, must be more common in Paris than I thought. I noticed that mincing and coquettish women were much noticed. My mother, too, was immensely admired. There is some meaning in all this, and I shall find it out.

The men, I must tell you, dearest, struck me, in general, as very ugly; and I don't know what fatal genius invented their clothes, which are really amazingly awkward, when one compares them with those of mankind in previous centuries. The present dress is minus color, effectiveness, or poesy; it speaks neither to the

senses nor the eye nor the intellect; and it must be very uncomfortable, it is so pinched and skimping. The hat strikes me particularly; it is the section of a column, perfectly stiff, and does n't take the shape of the head; but they tell me it is easier to make a revolution than to improve the style of men's hats. The manhood of France recoils at the idea of wearing a soft felt hat, and so, for want of one day's courage, it condemns itself to a lifetime of that ridiculous chimney-pot. And yet they say Frenchmen are volatile! But the men themselves are perfectly horrible, whatever they wear on their heads. I have seen such hard and weary faces, — faces in which there is neither calmness nor tranquillity; the lines all clash, and the wrinkles tell of balked ambitions and mortified vanity; a noble brow is rarely seen. "So these are Parisians!" I said to Miss Griffith. "Very amiable and witty men," she replied. I held my tongue. A spinster of thirty-six must have lots of indulgence in the depths of her soul.

In the evening I went to my first ball, and stayed close to my mother, who gave me her arm with a devotion that was well rewarded, for she carried off all the honors. I was a mere pretext for agreeable flatteries to her. She had the cleverness to make me dance with idiots who told me how hot the room was, as if I were frozen, and talked of the beauty of the

ball, as if I were blind. They all expatiated on the strange, unheard-of, singular, and extraordinary event of seeing me in society for the first time. My dress, with which I was delighted when I paraded up and down my white and gold salon all alone, now seemed hardly noticeable among the marvellous toilets of the other women. Each of those women had her attendant satellites; but they all watched each other out of the corners of their eyes; some, like my mother, were resplendent in beauty.

A young girl counts for nothing at a ball; she is only a machine to dance with. The men, with few exceptions, seemed to me no better than those I saw in the Champs-Élysées. They look worn out; their features have no character, — or rather, they all have the same character. The proud and vigorous faces I see in the portraits of our ancestors — they who joined moral strength to physical strength — exist no longer. There was present, however, a man of great talent who certainly stood forth from the rest on account of his personal beauty; but he did not give me the keen sensation I expected. It is true that I have not read his works, and he is not a nobleman. No matter what the genius of a bourgeois or a parvenu may be, I confess my blood does n't tingle for such as they. Besides, I thought this particular man of talent so full of himself and so oblivious of others that it struck me

we must all be things, not beings, to these great hunters for ideas. When men of talent love they ought to cease writing, *or* — they don't love ; something in their brain takes precedence of their mistress. I thought I saw all that in the behavior of this man, who is, they tell me, a professor, speaker, author, but whose ambition makes him the servant of all grandees.

Well, I soon decided on my own course. I thought it was very unworthy of me to be angry with the world for my want of success ; and I began to dance without troubling myself any more about it. The fact is, I love dancing. I heard all sorts of stupid gossip going on about the unknown persons around me. It seemed to me without any point ; but perhaps I needed to know certain things in order to comprehend it, for I noticed that most of the men and women took the keenest pleasure in saying and hearing particular speeches. Society evidently has a host of enigmas the solution of which seems rather difficult, — a multiplication of intrigues ! I have sharp eyes and keen ears, and as to my inward perceptions, *you* know about them, Mademoiselle de Maucombe.

I came home tired, and glad to be tired. I told what I thought and felt very candidly to my mother, who was with me; and she requested me to confide such things to no one but herself. " My dear girl," she said, " good taste is shown as much in knowing what

things we may not speak of as in speaking properly of those we may."

This bit of advice taught me to understand what feelings we ought to keep silence about to all the world, beginning with our mother. I took in at a glance the vast extent of female dissimulation. My darling, I do assure you that, thanks to our brazen innocence, you and I can be two very wide-awake little spies. How much may be discovered from a finger laid on a lip, a word, a look! And yet my mother's caution made me timid in a moment. What! can't I even express the natural delight I feel in dancing? If so, thought I, what becomes of the utterance of real feelings? I went to bed quite sad. I am still under the shock of this first encounter of my frank, gay nature with the hard laws of the world. There 's a shred of my white wool already left on the bushes by the wayside.

Adieu, dear angel.

V.

RENÉE DE MAUCOMBE TO LOUISE DE CHAULIEU.

October.

How your letter moves me, — especially when I compare our fates. What a brilliant world you are about to live in! and in what a peaceful retreat am I destined to pass my obscure existence!

Two weeks after my return to Maucombe (I have told you so much about the château that I will tell you no more, except that I found my room just as I had left it, and am now able to enjoy the glorious view of the valley of Gémenos which I looked at as a child without really seeing), — two weeks after my return my father and mother, accompanied by my two brothers, took me to dine with one of our neighbors, Monsieur de l'Estorade, an old nobleman who has become very rich, as people do grow rich in the provinces, by saving. This old man was unable to save his only son from Bonaparte's rapacity. After buying him off from the conscription he was forced to let him join the army in 1813, as member of the Guard of Honor. After the battle of Leipzig the old baron heard no more of his son. Monsieur de Montriveau, to whom he applied for information, declared that he had seen the young man taken prisoner by the Russians. Madame de l'Estorade, the mother, died of grief after a search in Russia had proved fruitless. The baron, who is truly religious, practised the noble virtue you and I used to cultivate at Blois, — hope! Hope showed him his son in dreams, and he saved his income and his wife's property in the interests of that lost son.

No one ever dared to make light of that hope, which is now justified; and I have discovered that the unexpected return of the son from Russia is the real cause

of my return from the Carmelites. How little we imagined, when our thoughts went wandering everywhere, that my future husband was slowly and painfully making his way on foot across Russia, Poland, and Germany. His hardships did not end until he reached Berlin, where the French ambassador facilitated his return to France. Monsieur de l'Estorade, the father, a small country land-owner in Provence, was not of sufficient consequence in Europe to make his son's name a passport.

The old man has lately bought a fine, though much neglected estate, which he intends to plant with mulberries from his own nurseries; and this, with the income from the mother's property, will give the Chevalier de l'Estorade a handsome fortune. The baron now has but one idea, that of marrying his son, — marrying him, I mean, to some girl of rank. My father and mother entered into his plans as soon as he told them his desire to obtain Mademoiselle Renée de Maucombe without a dowry for his son, and that he would settle upon her in the marriage contract the full sum that they might leave to her in their wills. At the time my youngest brother, Jean, came of age, he signed an acknowledgment of having received from his parents a sum equivalent to one third of their inheritance. That is how the noble families of Provence evade the infamous civil Code of the Sieur Bonaparte, which will

consign more girls to the convent than it will ever marry. The French nobility is, however, as far as I can make out, divided in opinion on this subject.

This dinner, my darling, as you have already imagined, was arranged to introduce your Renée to the exile. Our servants all wore their gala liveries and their gold-laced hats; the coachman put on his high top-boots; all five of us got into the old state coach, and arrived with much majesty before two o'clock (dinner being at three) at the manor-house of the Baron de l'Estorade. The old gentleman has no château; it is a simple country-house, standing at the foot of a hill and looking up our beautiful valley, the pride of which is, undoubtedly, the old castle of the Comtes de Maucombe.

This establishment is simply, as I say, a manor-house. The walls are of rubblestone in mortar, stuccoed with yellow cement, and roofed with hollow tiles of a fine red color. The windows, placed without regard to symmetry, have enormous outside shutters, painted yellow. The garden, which surrounds the building, is a true Provence garden, enclosed by low walls built of round pebbles laid in courses; an iron gate at the entrance on the high-road gives a somewhat baronial air to the place, though I must say it is rather thin and reminds me of Sister Angélique. The house has a stone portico with a miserable awning, and the garden,

shrubs, and trees are horribly dusty and neglected. It is easy to see that the old baron has just vegetated from day to day, with no other thought than of piling up his savings for his son. He eats the same food as his two servants, — a Provençal youth, and his wife's former maid.

The rooms are scarcely furnished. Nevertheless, the whole house was furbished up in our honor, and the dinner was served on the family plate, much embossed, and blackened by time. The exile, my dear darling, is thin, oh! as thin as that railing. He is pale, he is ill, he is taciturn. At thirty-seven years of age he looks to be fifty. The ebony of his ex-fine hair is threaded with white like a lark's wing. His beautiful blue eyes are cavernous; he is a little deaf, which gives him some resemblance to the Knight of the Sad Countenance. Nevertheless, I have graciously consented to become Madame de l'Estorade, and to allow myself to be dowered with two hundred and fifty thousand francs, but on the express condition that I shall be mistress of the manor-house and be allowed to make a park around it. I have also requested my father to make over to me a little water-course which can be made to lead from Maucombe here.

In a month I shall be Madame de l'Estorade; for I found favor with the exile, my dear. After the snows of Siberia, a man could hardly fail to like a pair of

black eyes which, as you used to say, ripen the fruits they look at. Louis de l'Estorade seems much pleased to marry "the beautiful Renée de Maucombe," — that is the glorious appellation of your old friend the Carmelite novice. While you are preparing to harvest the delights of a grand existence, that of a Demoiselle de Chaulieu, in the Paris where she reigns, I, your poor little white doe, Renée, daughter of the desert, have fallen from the empyrean where we flew, into the vulgar realities of a fate as humble as that of a daisy.

Yes, I have sworn to myself to console this poor young man who has had no youth, who went from his mother's lap to the hardships of war, from the joys of home to the ice and toil of Siberia. The monotony of my days to come will be varied with country pleasures, humble, it is true, but pleasures still. I will extend the oasis of the valley of Gémenos to my new home, and I will make a shady park about me. I will have lawns that are always green, coverts on the hillside, and at the highest point of all I will build a pretty kiosk and see from thence the sparkling Mediterranean. Orange and lemon trees and all the choicest productions of botanical nature will embellish my retreat, and — I shall be a mother. Yes, a natural, indestructible poesy will surround us. By remaining faithful to my duties I shall have nought to fear. My religious feelings are fully shared by my father-in-law and the Chevalier de l'Estorade.

Ah! treasure mine, I see life stretching before me like one of those great high-roads of France, straight and even, shaded by the eternal trees. There will not be another Bonaparte in this century, and I can keep my children, if I have them, with me; I can train them, educate them, make men of them, and find my life in theirs. If you do not fail of your destiny you will be the wife of one of the powerful of this earth, and the children of your Renée may look to you for protection.

So, then, farewell, for me at least, to all those high romances and strange vicissitudes of which you and I, my dearest, were once the heroines. I know in advance the history of my life; it will be traversed by great events, — the cutting of the Messieurs de l'Estorade's teeth; their food, their clothing, the mischief they will do in my new plantations. To watch their dawning lives, to embroider their caps, to be loved and admired by a poor sick man whose comfort I am, and to look up ever into the valley of Gémenos, — those are to be my pleasures. Perhaps this countrywoman may some day live in winter at Marseille; but that's a narrow, provincial stage which offers no danger.

No, I shall have nothing to fear, — not even one of those admirations which make us justly proud. We shall be interested in the silk-worms for whose benefit we sell our mulberry leaves. We shall know the ups

and downs of provincial life and the tempests of a household where quarrels are impossible, for Monsieur de l' Estorade makes known his intention of being guided by his wife. Now, as I shall do nothing to confirm him in that great wisdom, he will probably persist in it.

You will be, my dear Louise, the one romantic spot in my existence. Therefore tell me all your experiences; describe the balls and fêtes, and how you dress, and what flowers crown that dear blond hair. Tell me, too, all that men say and do; describe their ways. I shall be your double as you listen and dance; I shall feel when your hand is pressed; I shall hear you laugh. Ah! we shall often change places; I shall amuse myself in Paris, while you are the mother at La Crampade — for that, by the bye, is the name of my future manor. Poor Monsieur de l'Estorade, who thinks he is marrying only one woman! Will he find out that he has married two? Oh! what nonsense I am talking. Let me kiss you on both cheeks, — my lips are mine still; he has never ventured to do more than take my hand. I assure you we are most respectful; in fact, our conventionality is quite distressing. There! nonsense again! Adieu, dearest.

P. S. I have just received your third letter. Dear Louise, I have about a thousand francs to do what I like with; will you spend them for me in pretty things

for my new home which I can't get here or even at Marseille? While shopping for yourself think of the poor recluse at La Crampade; remember that I have no one of taste in Paris to make my purchases. I will answer your third letter very soon.

VI.

DON FELIPE HENAREZ TO DON FERNANDO.

PARIS, September.

THE date of my letter will show you, my dear brother, that the head of your house is no longer in any danger. If the massacre of our ancestors in the Court of Lions made us Spaniards and Christians whether we would or not, at any rate it bequeathed to us the prudence of Arabs; perhaps I now owe my safety to the blood of the Abencerrages which flows in my veins.

Fear made Ferdinand VII. so good a comedian that Valdés believed in his protestations. If it had not been for my cautions, the poor admiral would have been lost. The liberals will never learn what a true king is. The character of this particular Bourbon has been known to me for a long time; the more his Majesty assured us of his favor, the more I distrusted him. A true Spaniard never needs to repeat his promises. Whoso says much means to deceive.

Valdés escaped on board of an English vessel. As for me, as soon as the fortunes of my dear Spain were lost in Andalusia, I wrote to the bailiff of my property in Sardinia to provide for my safety. He sent some wily coral-fishers to await me off a certain point of the coast. While Ferdinand was exhorting the French to make sure of me, I had safely reached my estate of Macumer, and was living in the midst of bandits who defy all laws and perpetrate all vengeances. The head of the last Spanish-Arabian house of Grenada found himself in deserts equal to those of Africa, and mounted actually upon a barb in the great domain which has descended to him from the Saracens. The eyes of my bandits shone with joy and savage pride when they discovered that they were protecting their master, the Duc de Soria, an Henarez, from the vengeance of the king of Spain. I am the first of our family who has visited the island since the days when it belonged to our ancestors the Moors. Twenty-two carbines were instantly offered to annihilate Ferdinand de Bourbon, son of a race all unknown when our forefathers the Abencerrages came as conquerors to the banks of the Loire.

I expected to be able to live on the revenues of this great domain, which, alas! we have so ill cared for; but I soon found out my mistake and the veracity of Queverdo's reports. The poor man has twenty-two lives of men at my service, but not one copper farthing;

twenty thousand acres of plain and meadow, but not a dwelling; virgin forests, and not one article of furniture. Six million of francs and the presence of a master for half a century would be necessary to put these magnificent lands to any profit. I shall, however, think about it; refugees have plenty of time to think over their own affairs as well as over their lost cause.

At Marseille I heard of Riego's death; the painful thought came to me that my life, too, would end slowly, obscurely, in just such a martyrdom. Will it be living at all to have no country for which to consecrate myself, no beloved woman to exist for? "To love and conquer" — two aspects of one idea — was the law graven on our sabres, written in letters of gold on the arches of our palaces, sung and resung incessantly by the plashing waters of our fountains in their marble basins, — a law which evermore will uselessly incite my soul; for the sabre is broken, the palace in ashes, the living waters of the fountain are lost in the sterile sands.

Here, my dear brother, is my last will and testament. Obey it. You will now see why I restrained your ardor and commanded you to remain faithful to the reigning king. As your friend and brother, I entreat you to obey me; as your master and the head of our house I command it.

Go to the king; demand my dignities, my property, my duties, and my titles. He may shuffle and hesitate

and make a few royal grimaces; but you must tell him that you love and are beloved by Marie Heredia, and that Marie can marry none but the Duc de Soria. You will see him quiver with joy when you tell him that. The great fortune of the Heredias would have hindered his accomplishing my ruin; but if you step into my shoes and despoil me he will consent joyfully.

Yes, you must marry Marie; I discovered the secret of your mutual love, so long subdued. I have already prepared the old count for this substitution. Marie and I were obeying the wishes and conventions of our parents. You are handsome as a child of love, I am ugly as a grandee of Spain; you are beloved, I was the object of a secret repugnance; you will soon overcome the resistance that a sense of my misfortunes will rouse against you in the heart of that noble Spanish woman.

As Marie's own jewels can replace those I ask for, send me my mother's diamonds, which will suffice to make me independent. Send them by my foster-mother, old Urraca, the only one of my household I wish to retain. She alone knows how to make my chocolate.

During our short revolution my life was reduced to the necessaries of living. You will therefore find the revenues of the last two years almost intact in the hands of the intendant. That sum belongs to me, but as the marriage of a Duc de Soria will occasion great expense, we will share it. You won't refuse a wedding-present

from your brother, the bandit. Besides, I choose to make it.

The barony of Macumer being in Sardinia, and not under the rule of the king of Spain, I keep it, and it may afford me a country and a name, if, by chance, the opportunity is given me.

God be thanked, at any rate, that the House of Soria is safe.

At this very moment, while I am telling you that I am nothing more than the Baron de Macumer, the French cannon are announcing the return of the Duc d'Angoulême. You will easily understand why I interrupt my letter.

October.

When I reached Paris I had scarcely a hundred francs in my pocket. A statesman seems very petty when, in the midst of great catastrophes which he has not prevented, he thinks of his selfish interests. The vanquished Moors had horses and a desert; Christians cheated of their hopes have monasteries. However, my resignation is not yet despondency. I am not so near a convent that I cease to dream of life. Olzaga gave me, at great risk to himself, letters of introduction, one of which was to a publisher who is to us Spaniards what Galignani is to the English. He has obtained eight scholars for me at three francs a lesson. I go every other day to each pupil, so that I give four lessons

a day and earn twelve francs — much more than I need for my daily wants. When Urraca arrives with the diamonds, I will rejoice the heart of some struggling Spaniard by handing my pupils over to him. I live in the rue Hillerin-Bertin, with a poor widow who takes boarders. My room faces south, and looks into a little garden. I hear no noise, I see verdure, and I spend only three francs a day. I am sometimes quite amazed at the calm, pure pleasure I take in this life of Dionysius in Corinth. From sunrise till ten o'clock I smoke and drink my chocolate, sitting at my window and watching the growth of two Spanish plants, a gorze or broom rising from a tangle of jessamine, gold on a white ground, an image that will ever cause a scion of the Moors to quiver with emotion.

At ten o'clock I start upon my round of lessons, which keeps me busy until four, when I return to dinner, and smoke and read till I go to bed. I could live this life for a long time. I like this mingling of work and meditation, solitude and intercourse with others.

Therefore, my dear Fernando, be satisfied and happy; my abdication is accomplished without one backward longing; like that of Charles V., it is followed by no regret, no desire like that of Bonaparte to revive the past. Five days and nights have passed since I wrote my last testament, but five centuries of thought have elapsed since then. Grandeur, titles, and wealth are

to me as though they had never been. Now that the barrier of respect between us has necessarily fallen, I can let you read my heart, dear brother. That heart, which gravity covers with an impenetrable coat of mail, is full of tenderness and unemployed devotion; but no woman ever divined this, — not even she who from her cradle was destined to be my wife. There lies the secret of my ardent political life. Having no woman to love, I loved Spain. Spain too has eluded me! Now that I am nothing, now that I can contemplate a destroyed *myself*, I ask my mind why life came to me and when it will leave me. Why has a race of chivalry *par excellence* given its earliest virtues, its Arab love, its warm poesy to its last scion? Will the seed remain within its horny envelope without budding, without shedding its eastern perfume from some radiant calix? What crime have I committed before my birth that I am unable to inspire love in the hearts of others? Was I, from the day I was born, a wreck cast up on a barren shore? I find in my soul the desert of my forefathers, lighted by a sun that scorches but enables nothing to grow there. Well, I will still be proud of my fallen race, my useless vigor, my wasted love, — old young man that I am! I will await here where I am, better perhaps than elsewhere, the last favor, death. Alas! beneath these foggy skies no spark can ever fall to light the flame of my smouldering embers.

My last words must needs be those of Jesus Christ, — "My God, my God! why hast thou abandoned me?" Terrible words, the depth of which no soul has fathomed.

Fernando, believe how happy I am in living in you and Marie; I shall henceforth look upon you both with the pride of a creator glorying in his work. Love each other well, and always; give me no griefs; dissensions between you would do more harm to me than to yourselves. Our mother foresaw that events would one day fulfil her hopes. Perhaps a mother's desire is a compact between herself and God. Besides, methinks she was one of those mysterious beings who are able to communicate with heaven and bring back visions of the future. Many a time have I read on the lines of her forehead that she wished for Fernando the honors and wealth of Felipe. I once said this to her; she answered me with tears, betraying the struggles of a heart that should have been equally for one as for the other, but which an unconquerable love gave wholly to you. Thus her spirit will hover joyfully above your heads when you kneel at the altar. Ah! Donna Clara, will you then embrace your Felipe — at last? See, he yields to your beloved even the dear young girl you regretfully pushed into his arms. What I do now will be pleasing to the dead, to the king; God wills it. Reject nothing, Fernando; obey me and keep silence.

P. S. Tell Urraca to call me only Monsieur Henarez. Say not a word about me to Marie. You must be the only living being to know the secrets of this Christianized Moor, in whose veins dies the blood of the last great family of the desert as he ends his days in solitude. Adieu.

VII.

LOUISE DE CHAULIEU TO RENÉE DE MAUCOMBE.

January, 1824.

WHAT! married so hastily? Is that how one ought to choose a husband? At the end of a month to promise yourself to a man, without loving him, without really knowing anything about him! He may be deaf and dumb, — there are a dozen ways of being that! he may be sickly, disagreeable, intolerable. Oh, Renée, don't you see what they are doing with you? you are wanted to continue the glorious house of l'Estorade, and that's the whole of it. You will become a mere provincial. Are these the promises we made to each other? If I were you, I'd rather float about the isles of Hyères in a boat, hoping that some corsair would capture me and sell me to the Grand Seignior; at any rate I should be a sultana, and some day the Validé; I should turn the seraglio upside down and

inside out as long as I was young, and after I was old, too. But you, you are coming out of one convent to go into another. I know you; you are a coward, and you are just letting yourself be driven into this thing with the meekness of a lamb. Come to Paris; I 'll give you advice; together we will turn men's heads and make ourselves queens. Your husband, if you really marry him, my poor darling, might make himself a deputy. I know what deputies are now, and I 'd explain the whole mechanism to you. You could play that instrument very well, and live in Paris and become a fashionable woman. Oh, I warn you, I shall not let you stay in that manor-house with the cramped name.

Monday.

It is now two whole weeks, my dearest, that I have lived the life of the world; one night Italian opera, next Grand Opera, and after them a ball. Ah! society is fairy-land. The music of the Italian opera enchants me, and while my soul is swimming in divinest pleasure opera glasses are levelled at me, I 'm admired! But, with a single glance, I can make the boldest young man lower his eyes. I have seen a number of charming ones, and yet, do you know, not one pleases me, none has given me anything like the emotion I feel when hearing Garcia in his glorious duet with Pellegrini in "Otello." Good heavens! what a jealous creature

Rossini must be to be able to express the passion of jealousy like that! What a cry it is: "Il mio cor si divide!" All this is Greek to you, for you have never heard Garcia; but you know what a jealous nature mine is. Shakespeare was a terribly sad dramatist. Othello lives for glory; he wins victories, commands, parades, reviews, leaving Desdemona in her corner; and Desdemona, who sees him preferring the stupidities of public life to her love, doesn't get angry! Poor sheep, she deserved death. Let the man I deign to love dare to do aught else than love me! For my part I believe in the long probations of the days of chivalry. I consider it was very impertinent and very silly of that young puppy to demur when his sovereign lady sent him to fetch her glove from the lion's den; she was reserving for him, no doubt, some dazzling flower of love, which he lost after winning it, the fool!

But I 'm chattering on as if I had n't a great piece of news to tell you! My father will probably be sent to represent the king our master at Madrid; I say "our" master, for I am to accompany the embassy. My mother prefers to stay here; and my father takes me so as to have a woman about him.

My dear, this may seem to you all very simple, but there is something under it which it has taken me only fifteen days to find out. My mother would willingly follow my father to Madrid, if he could take with him,

as secretary to the embassy, a certain Monsieur de Canalis. But the king appoints the secretaries, and the duke dares neither to oppose the king, who is very obstinate, nor annoy my mother; so my diplomatic parent thinks he cuts the Gordian knot by leaving the duchess behind him. Monsieur de Canalis, the great poet of the day, is the young man who cultivates the society of my mother, and studies diplomacy with her daily from two to four o'clock. Diplomacy must be an interesting matter, for he is as faithful in his attendance as a gambler at the Bourse.

Monsieur le Duc de Rhétoré, our eldest, solemn, cold, and queer, also stays behind; he would be crushed by his father in Madrid. Miss Griffith says he is in love with an opera dancer. The idea of loving legs and pirouettes! I have remarked that he goes to all the plays in which Tullia (that's her name) dances; he applauds all her steps and leaves the box immediately after she has danced them. As to my second brother, he is with his regiment, and I have not yet seen him.

So that's how it is that I am destined to play Antigone to an ambassador of his Majesty. Perhaps I shall marry in Spain; and perhaps my father hopes to marry me there without a dowry, just as you are being sacrificed to the broken-down exile. My father himself proposed to take me with him, and offered me his Spanish teacher to prepare me. I replied: "You

want me to make a marriage in Spain, — that 's your castle." He made no reply, but he gave me a shrewd glance. He has lately taken to teasing me at breakfast; he studies me, and I baffle him. He, ambassador *in petto* though he be, is mystified about me. I am sure he has been taking me for a fool. He asked me what I thought of a certain young man, and also of two or three young ladies whom I have met lately. I answered by stupid remarks about the color of their hair, the difference of their heights, and their faces. My father seemed disappointed to find me so silly; he evidently blamed himself for having questioned me. "But of course, father," I added, "I don't say what I really think, because my mother lately showed me the impropriety of speaking my mind." "In your own family you can speak without restraint," observed my mother. "Well, then," I continued, "the young men seem to me more self-interested than interesting; more occupied with themselves than with us; and they can't, to tell the truth, disguise it. They change the expression of countenance they put on when speaking to us, instantly, and imagine, apparently, we have no eyes to see it. When they speak to us they behave like lovers; when they don't speak, like husbands. As for those young ladies, they are so insincere it is impossible to tell their character except by the way they dance; their shapes and movements are the only things about

them that don't deceive. I confess I have been frightened by the brutality of the great world. Things happen at supper-time, for instance, which give me an idea (of course in due proportion) of what public riots must be. Politeness very imperfectly conceals the universal selfishness. I certainly did expect the world to be very different. Women count for little; perhaps that's the result of Bonaparte's doctrines." "Armande has made astonishing progress," remarked my mother. "Did you expect me to be always asking for Madame de Staël?" I said. My father laughed and went out.

Saturday.

My dear, I have not said all. Here is something I keep for your private ear. Love, as we imagined it, must be most carefully hidden, for I can't see a trace of it anywhere. It is true I have intercepted a few glances given in a ball-room, but oh! so flat and meaningless! Our love — that world of marvels, of glorious dreams, of delightful realities, pleasures and pains alternating, smiles illuminating the character, words which enchant, happiness ever given, ever received, the pangs of absence, the joys bestowed by the presence of the loved one — of all that, nothing! nothing! Where and how did those splendid flowers of the soul come into being? Who deceived us; who has lied to us, — the world, or our own hearts? I have seen men,

young men, by the hundred, and not one of them is able to cause me the slightest emotion. They might show me admiration and devotion, and even fight for my sake, and I should still look at them with indifferent eyes. Love, my dearest, has one strange thing about it, a rare phenomenon: we may live all our life without ever meeting the being to whom Nature has assigned the power of making us happy. That reflection makes me shudder; for suppose that being should arrive too late! — what can you say to that?

For the last few days I have begun to be frightened about our destiny, and to discover why the women that I see have such sad faces under the layer of vermilion which the false joys of excitement put there. They all marry hap-hazard; that is how you are going to marry. A perfect storm of thoughts has been rushing through my mind. To be loved every day and all days in the same manner and yet differently, to be loved as much after ten years of happiness as the first day, — such a love would take years to produce; we must be long desired, we must awaken many curiosities and satisfy them all, excite many sympathies and respond to them. Can there be laws for the creations of the soul, as there are for the creations of nature? Will gladness maintain itself? In what proportion must the joys of love be mingled with tears? The cold tenor of that funereal, monotonous, perpetual convent life suddenly

seemed to me a possibility; whereas the riches, glories, tears, delights, the fêtes, joys, pleasures of an equal, mutual, and sanctioned love sprang up before me as an impossible attainment. I see no place in this great city for the sweets of love, — for its sacred walks beside the hedges, with the moonlight shining on the waters and our hearts resisting entreaty. Rich and young and beautiful, I have only to love, and love might become my life, my sole occupation; and yet, during the three months that I have passed hither and thither in society with impatient eagerness I have found nothing to win me in the brilliant, keen, and greedy looks about me. No voice has stirred my heart, no eye has illuminated the world before me. Music alone has satisfied my soul; that alone has been to me what our friendship is. Sometimes I sit for hours at my window at night, gazing at the garden, summoning events from the hidden sources whence they come. At other times when I drive out and leave my carriage to walk in the Champs-Élysées I fancy that the hero who is to rouse my torpid soul is following me and watching me. I look for him, and all I see are the jugglers, the sellers of gingerbread, persons hurrying about their business, lovers trying to evade observation; and to the latter I want to say: "You who are happy, tell me what love is." But then I check these foolish thoughts and get back into the carriage, resolved to live and die an old maid.

Love is certainly an incarnation; what then are the conditions necessary to bring it about? We are not always sure of being in harmony with ourselves; what would it be if we were two? God alone can solve that problem. I begin to think I would rather go back to the convent. If I stay in the world I shall do things that are very like follies, for it is impossible for me to accept what I see. Everything wounds my sensibilities, my secret thoughts, the ethics of my soul. Ah! my mother is a happy woman; she is adored by her great little Canalis. My dear, I am seized sometimes with a horrible curiosity to know what they say to each other during those two hours.

Griffith says she has gone through all these ideas of mine; she used to long to tear the eyes out of the women she saw happy, and to scratch and vilify them. According to her, virtue consists in burying such savage longings in the depth of one's heart. What is the depth of one's heart? A reservoir of all that is bad within us?

Well, I am much humiliated not to have encountered, so far, an adorer. I am a marriageable girl, but I have brothers and a proud family and touchy parents. Ah! if that is what deters the men they are very cowardly. The rôle of Chimène in "The Cid" and the Cid himself captivate me. What a glorious play it is! Well, well, a truce to all this. Adieu.

VIII.

SAME TO SAME.

January.

My father and I have a Spanish teacher, a poor refugee forced to escape because he took part in the revolution the Duc d'Angoulême went to Spain to suppress; we owe a number of fine fêtes to that triumph. Though a liberal, and doubtless a bourgeois, this man interests me. I imagine he was condemned to death, and I have tried to make him talk, so as to learn his secrets. But he 's as taciturn as a Castilian and as proud as Gonsalvo de Cordova; though, I must say, he is gentle too, and has angelic patience; his pride is not in arms like the Griffith's, it is inward; he obtains the respect that is due to him by keeping strictly to his duty, and he holds us at a distance by the ceremonious respect he testifies to us. My father insists that there 's a good deal of the *grand seigneur* about Monsieur Henarez, whom he calls Don Henarez among ourselves by way of a joke. One day I ventured to call him so to his face. He raised his eyes (which he usually keeps lowered) and gave me a lightning glance which confused me; my dear, he has the most beautiful eyes you ever saw! I asked him if I had offended him in any way; and he replied in his grandiose Spanish language: —

"Mademoiselle, I have come here to teach you Spanish."

I own I was ashamed and blushed. I was going to reply with some choice impertinence, when I happened to recollect what our dear mother in God used to tell us; so I answered, —

"If you have any cause to complain of me say so; I shall be much obliged to you."

He quivered; the blood rushed to his olive cheeks as he answered with gentle emotion: —

"Religion must have taught you better than I can how to respect misfortune. If I were indeed a grandee of Spain and had lost my all through the triumph of Ferdinand VII. your jest would be a cruelty; but if I am only a poor teacher of languages is it not an untimely sarcasm? Neither is worthy of a young girl of your station."

I took his hand and said: "I invoke your religion and ask you to forget the wrong I have done."

He bowed his head, opened my "Don Quixote," and sat down to our lesson.

This little incident upset me more than all the looks and compliments and fine phrases I have received since I have been in society. During the lesson I watched this man attentively; he seemed to be unaware that I did so; he never raised his eyes to look at me. I then discovered that this master of ours, whom we had sup-

posed to be forty years old, is really no more than twenty-six or eight. Miss Griffith made me take notice of the beauty of his black hair, and also of his teeth, which are like pearls. As for his eyes, they are velvet and fire both. With these exceptions he is small and ugly. Spaniards are said to be deficient in cleanliness, but he is scrupulously nice and neat; his hands are whiter than his face. His back is a little bent; his head is enormous, of a queer shape; his ugliness, which is rather spicy, is aggravated by pits of the small pox which seam his face. His forehead is very prominent; his eyebrows meet and are too thick, which gives him a hard look repulsive to the soul. He has the sickly, pinched look of children doomed to die, but who are kept alive by incessant care, like Sœur Marthe. My father says he is a miniature likeness of Cardinal Ximenes.

My father does not like him, and is always very stiff in his presence. His manners have a natural dignity which seems to make the dear duke uneasy, for he can't endure superiority under any form beside him. As soon as we both know Spanish we are to start for Madrid.

Two days after the rebuff Henarez gave me, I said, on the occasion of his next lesson, by way of showing a sort of gratitude: "I make no doubt you have left Spain on account of political events; if my father is

sent there, as they say he will be, we shall be able to render you some service, and even obtain your pardon if you are condemned to a penalty."

"It is not in the power of any one to do me a service," he replied.

"Is it that you will accept none?" I asked; "or is it really a matter of impossibility?"

"Both," he replied with a bow, speaking in a tone which forced me to keep silence. The blood of my fathers boiled in my veins. Such pride incensed me, and I dropped the Sieur Henarez then and there.

And yet, my dear, there is something fine in not accepting anything from others. "He won't even take our friendship," I kept saying to myself as I conjugated a verb. Then I stopped short, and told him what I was thinking — in Spanish. Henarez answered very politely that all such sentiments demanded equality, which could not exist in our case, and therefore it was useless to discuss it. "Do you mean by equality reciprocity of sentiment, or similarity of rank?" I asked, determined to drag him out of a coldness which irritated me. He raised his formidable eyes, and I was forced to lower mine. My dear, the man is an inexplicable enigma. He seemed to ask me if my words were a declaration; there was joy, pride, an anguish of uncertainty in his look which wrung my heart. I saw plainly that these little coquetries, which mean nothing with

Frenchmen, are liable to have a dangerous significance to Spaniards; I retreated into my shell, feeling rather foolish. As he finished the lesson and took his leave he gave me a look full of humble entreaty. "Do not trifle with misfortune," it seemed to say. This sudden contrast with his hitherto grave and cold demeanor made a deep impression on me. It is horrible to think and to say, but I believe there are treasures of affection in that man.

IX.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADEMOISELLE DE CHAULIEU.

December.

All is said and done, dear love; it is Madame de l'Estorade who writes to you; but nothing is changed between us; there is only a girl the less. Don't be troubled; I thought soberly about my consent, and I did not give it heedlessly.

My life is now mapped out. The certainty of following a plain high-road suits both my mind and my character. A great moral force has settled forever what we used to call the chances of life. My husband and I have an estate to improve, a dwelling to beautify; I have a household to manage and render cheerful, and

an unfortunate man to reconcile with life. No doubt I shall also have a family to care for, children to bring up. Why be sorry, dearest? Ordinary life cannot be a grand or excessive thing. I admit that those immense desires which expand both soul and mind do not enter into a contract such as this, — at least, not apparently. Nevertheless, I do not think that the humble things to which I shall henceforth devote my life are devoid of passion. The task of making a poor man, long the plaything of misfortune, believe in happiness is a fine work, and will suffice to relieve the monotony of my existence. I see no ground for suffering, but I do see the chance of doing much good.

Between you and me, I do not love Louis de l'Estorade with the sort of love which makes the heart beat fast when we hear a step, which stirs us to our centre at the tone of a voice, or the glance of an eye; but neither is he displeasing to me. What will I do — I hear you ask — with that instinct for things sublime, with those strong and stirring thoughts which bind you and me together and are a part of ourselves? Yes, I admit I have considered that. Dearest, it will be a great thing still to keep those powers hidden in our hearts, to employ them silently for the good of the family, to make them the means of happiness to beings entrusted to us and to whom we owe our highest selves. Even so, the period at which such faculties are at their best

is limited in women; when passed, I shall look back and see that my life, though not grand, will have been calm, even, and without painful vicissitudes.

We are born to privileges; we can choose between love and motherhood. Well, I have chosen; I shall make my gods my children, and find my elysium in this corner of the earth.

That is all that I can tell you to-day. I thank you for the pretty things you have sent me. Give your capable eye to a further list of commissions, which I enclose. I wish to live in an atmosphere of luxury and elegance, and to get as little as I can in the provinces. You complain that I shall grow provincial. No, by living in solitude a woman remains herself, and does not take the color of her surroundings. I count on you to keep me informed as to the fashions. In his enthusiasm over the marriage, my father-in-law denies me nothing; he is pulling the house to pieces; it is full of workmen from Paris who are modernizing everything.

X.

MADEMOISELLE DE CHAULIEU TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

January.

Oh, Renée! you have saddened me for days. Can it be that all that beauty, that proud and noble face,

those naturally elegant manners, that soul full of precious gifts, those eyes in which our souls may slake their thirst in springs of love, that heart brimming over with exquisite delicacy, that broad, clear mind, all, all those rare faculties, those triumphs of nature and of our mutual education, — treasures from which should issue, for passion and for love, choice riches, poems, hours as full as years, pleasures to enslave a man, — all, all, all are to be lost in a vulgar, common marriage, lost in the vacancy of a life which will soon become irksome to you? I hate the children you are going to have; they 'll be ill-formed. Everything is mapped out and foreseen in such a life; you 'll have nothing to hope, or fear, or suffer. And suppose you meet, some glorious day, a being who awakens you from the sleep into which you are going? Ah, I have a cold chill down my back at the very thought.

Well, well, at any rate you have a friend; and no doubt you 'll be the spirit of that valley; you will bathe in its beauties, you will live with Nature, you will penetrate into the grandeur of her things, into the slowness of vegetation and the rapidity of thought, and then — as you gaze at your smiling flowers you will be forced to question yourself. I know beforehand what you will write to me when you are going along your straight road, with a husband before and your children behind you, one in silence with a satisfied air, the others

screeching and tumbling about. Your misty valley with its hillsides bare or shaded with trees, your singular Provence meadows threaded with brooklets of transparent water, the many tones the light takes on, — all this infinitude about you, varied by God himself, will force you to think of the contrasting monotony of your life. Then, my Renée, remember, I am here; you will ever have a friend whose heart is untouched by social pettiness, a heart that is all your own.

Monday.

Dearest, my Spaniard is delightfully melancholy; there is something about him, I don't know what it is, so calm, austere, dignified, profound, that I must own he interests me exceedingly. The solemnity and silence in which he wraps himself is enticing to the soul. He is mute and superb like a dethroned king. Griffith and I study him like a riddle. How very queer! a teacher of languages actually gets more hold upon my thoughts than any other man has been able to obtain; and yet I have passed in review all the sons of great families, attachés to embassies and ambassadors themselves, generals and sub-lieutenants, peers of France, their sons and nephews, the court and society!

The man's coldness is irritating. The haughtiest pride fills the space he chooses to keep between himself and us; he wraps himself, as it were, in obscurity.

He is the one who coquets; I 'm the daring one. This curious reversal amuses me all the more because it can have no consequences. What is a man, a Spaniard, a teacher? I don't feel the slightest respect for any man whatever, be it the king himself. I think women are worth much more than men, even the most distinguished men. Oh! how I would have ruled Napoleon! I 'd have made him feel, if he loved me, that he moved by my will.

Yesterday I said a satirical thing which must have cut teacher Henarez to the quick. He said nothing; the lesson was just over; he took his hat, bowed, and gave me a look which makes me think he will never come back any more. I like that; there would be something dangerous in playing a second edition of "La Nouvelle Héloïse," by Jean Jacques Rousseau. I have just read that book, and it has made me take a positive hatred to love. A discussing and speechifying love, I think intolerable. Clarissa, too, she is a great deal too self-satisfied when she has written that long little letter of hers; but Richardson's work is a capital explanation, so my father says, of Englishwomen. Rousseau's seems to me a philosophical sermon in epistles.

Love, to my mind, is a poem entirely personal. All that writers tell us about it is both true and false. The fact is, my dear darling, now that you will know noth-

ing but humdrum love, I shall be obliged, in the interests of our mutual existence, to remain unmarried and have some grand passion, or how will you and I ever know life?

Write me exactly all that happens to you, especially during the first days you spend with that animal called a husband. I 'll promise the same if any man loves me. Adieu, poor, dear, gobbled-up darling.

XI.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADEMOISELLE DE CHAULIEU.

La Crampade.

You and your Spaniard, dearest, make me shudder. I write these few lines to beg you to dismiss him. All you tell me reveals one of those dangerous characters who, having nothing to lose, risk all. The man ought not to be your lover, and he can't be your husband. I will write you in detail about my marriage when I feel less anxiety than your last letter has caused me.

XII.

MADEMOISELLE DE CHAULIEU TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

February.

Dearest, this morning, at nine o'clock, my father sent to say he would pay me a visit. I was up and dressed, and I found him solemnly seated by the fire in my salon, far more grave and thoughtful than is his wont. He pointed to the sofa opposite to him; I understood his gesture and seated myself with a gravity which mimicked his so closely that he began to smile, though the smile itself was gravely sad.

"You are as clever as your grandmother," he began.

"Now, father, don't play the courtier here," I answered, laughing. "You have something you want to ask of me."

He rose from his seat in much agitation and talked to me for half an hour. This conversation, my dear, is worthy of preservation. As soon as he left me I sat down at my writing-table and tried to make a record of every word. It is the first time I have known my father to speak out all his thought.

He began by flattering me, and did it very well; I could not help feeling grateful for being understood and appreciated.

"Armande," he said, "I was strangely mistaken about you, and now I am agreeably surprised. When

you returned from the convent I took you for a girl like other girls, without any particular capacity, quite ignorant, reflecting little, and easy to please with trinkets and gowns."

"Thank you, father, in the name of Girlhood," I said.

"Oh!" he said, with the gesture of a statesman, "there is no such thing as real girlhood in these days. But as for you, you have an enlightened mind; you judge all things for what they are worth; your clear-sightedness is quite remarkable. You are very satirical; you seem to see nothing, but you do see even the causes of the effects other people are examining. You are a minister in petticoats; there is no one here but you who can understand what I am going to say to you. I can therefore only employ you against yourself in the matter of a sacrifice I am about to ask of you. I shall explain to you frankly the plans I have long formed, and in which I still persist. In order to make you yield to them, I must prove to you that they are the outcome of noble sentiments. I feel myself obliged to lay before you political considerations of the highest interest for the kingdom, which would simply seem tiresome to any other young girl. After hearing what I have to say you shall have time for reflection; I will give you six months if you desire it. You are absolute mistress of yourself; if you refuse the sacrifice I am

about to ask of you I shall submit to your decision and say no more."

This exordium, my dearest, made me really serious, and I said to him, "Go on, father."

Now, here are the exact words of which the statesman delivered himself: —

"My child, France is in a precarious situation, known only to the king and a few of the leading minds. But the king is a head without arms; the leading minds who know the secret danger have no authority over the men who could avert it and bring about better things. These men, the result of popular elections, cannot be made instruments. Remarkable as many of them are, they are only continuing the work of social destruction; they will not help us in strengthening the edifice. In a word, there are now but two parties in the State, — that of Sylla, and that of Marius; I am for Sylla against Marius. That's the outline of the matter. Coming to particulars, the Revolution continues; it is implanted in the law, it is written on the soil, it is fixed in all minds; it is the more formidable because the greater number of the king's supporters, who see that it has neither soldiers nor money, think it vanquished. The king has a great mind; he sees clearly; but he is over-persuaded day after day by the followers of his brother, who go too fast; he has not two years to live, and he wants to die in peace. Do you know,

my dear girl, what has really been the most destructive effect of the Revolution? You probably never thought of it. In cutting off the king's head the Revolution cut off the heads of all fathers of families. The Family no longer exists; we have nothing but individuals. In seeking to become a nation, France has ceased to be an empire. By proclaiming equality in the inheritance of patrimony the spirit of Family has been destroyed; public finances have been created; and so the way has been opened to feebleness among the leaders, brute force among the masses, the extinction of the arts, the reign of individual interests. We are now between two systems: either the State must be constituted through the Family, or it must be constituted on personal interests; democracy or aristocracy, discussion or obedience, catholicism or religious indifference, — there 's the question in a nut-shell. I belong to the small number of those who wish to resist what is called the people, — in the people's interest, be it understood. It is no longer a question of feudal rights, as fools declare, nor of the rights of the nobility; it is a question of the safety of the State, of the very life of France. The existence of any nation not based on the paternal power has no security. That power is the first rung in the ladder of responsibility and subordination which leads up to the king. The king is the country, the country, ourselves; to die for the king is to die for

ourselves, for our Family, which can no more die than the kingdom dies. Every animal has its instinct; the instinct of man is the spirit of family. A country is strong when it is composed of rich families, all of whose members are interested in the defence of the common wealth, — be it money, glory, privileges, or enjoyments; it is weak when it is composed of individuals held to no solidarity, to whom it signifies little whether they obey seven men or one, a Russian or a Corsican, provided they are each individually allowed to keep their bit of land; and these selfish fools don't see that it is certain to be eventually taken from them! We are hurrying to a dreadful state of things, in case of failure. We shall soon have none but penal or fiscal laws, — your money, or your life! The most generous nation on this earth will soon cease to be led by noble sentiments. We shall ourselves have made and developed incurable wounds in our own body, — for instance, universal jealousy; the upper classes will soon be indistinguishable; equality of wants and desires will be mistaken for equality of powers; recognized capacity, true superiority will be swept under by an invading flood of bourgeoisie. It was possible to select one man among a thousand, but how can you find him among three million similar ambitions, all clothed with the same livery, — that of mediocrity? This triumphant mass of the bourgeoisie does not per-

ceive that it will have against it another terrible mass, — that of the peasant-proprietors; twenty millions of living acres, walking, talking, comprehending nothing but wanting all the more, barricading every avenue and controlling the brute force of the nation."

"But," I said, interrupting my father, "what can I do for the State? I feel no inclination to be the Joan of Arc of families, and die by slow fire at the stake of a convent."

"You are a little pest," he replied. "When I talk sense you reply with a jest; when I jest you talk to me as if you were an ambassador yourself."

"Love lives on contradictions," I said.

He laughed. "Think over what I have now said to you," he continued. "You will observe how much confidence and even grandeur there is in my speaking to you thus frankly; and perhaps events may still further help my projects. I know very well that toward you those projects are unjust and injurious; consequently, I ask your consent to them less from your heart and your imagination than from your reason. I see in you more reason and good sense than I have met with in others, I don't care who they are."

"You flatter yourself," I said, laughing; "for remember, I am your child."

"Well," he continued, "I cannot be inconsistent; whoso desires an end must take the means to it. We

owe an example to others. You ought not to have a fortune until that of your younger brother is assured. I wish to employ all your capital in providing an entailed estate and title for him."

"But," I said, "if I resign my fortune to you, I hope you will not prevent me from living as I please and making myself happy in my own way?"

"Provided," he answered, "that the life you choose to lead does not in any way detract from the honor, the consideration, and I may say, the glory of your family."

"Well, well!" I cried, "you are depriving me rather quickly of the reason and good sense you gave me just now."

"There is no such thing to be found in France," he said, rather bitterly, "as a man of station willing to marry a girl of high rank without fortune, and to settle a dowry upon her. If such a man could be found he would belong to the class of upstart bourgeoisie, and my views on that subject are, I confess, of the eleventh century."

"So are mine," I said; "but why be so discouraging? There must be some old peers of France to be had."

"Louise," he cried, "you know too much!"

Then he kissed my hand and left me, smiling.

Monday.

I received your short letter that same morning, and it has made me think seriously of the abyss into which

you evidently think I am about to fall. A voice seems to cry within me, "You will fall!" so I have determined to take precautions. Henarez has ventured to look at me, my dear, and his eyes trouble me; they produce a sensation which I can only compare to that of terror. I can't look at that man any more than I can at a toad; he is ugly — and fascinating.

For the last two days I have been deliberating whether I shall tell my father plainly that I do not wish to learn Spanish, and so get rid of Henarez; but then, after stern resolutions on the subject, I feel a desire to be stirred by the horrible sensations I have on seeing him, and I say to myself, "Once more, and then I'll send him away." My dear, his voice has such a penetrating sweetness! he speaks as Fodor sings. His manners are simple, without the slightest affectation. And oh, such beautiful teeth! Just now, as he left me, he seemed to notice how much he interested me, and he made a motion — a very respectful one — to take my hand to kiss it; but he repressed the impulse instantly, as if frightened by his own boldness or the distance he was about to cross. Little as it was, I saw the whole thing and I smiled; for nothing is more touching than to see the impulse of a socially inferior nature driven back upon itself. There is so much audacity in the love of a bourgeois for a girl of rank! My smile emboldened him; the poor man looked for his hat and either could

not or would not find it, so I very gravely gave it to him. Tears moistened his eyes. There was a whole world of things and thoughts in that short moment. We understood each other so well that the idea came to me to give him my hand to kiss. Perhaps it was as good as telling him that love might cross the space between us. Well, I don't know what made me do it; Griffith's back was turned, and I did hold out to him, proudly enough, my little white paw, and then — I felt the fire of his lips, softened by tears that fell from his eyes. Ah! my angel, I sat quite still and strengthless in my chair, thoughtful — I was happy; but it is impossible to explain how or why. What I felt was poesy, a poem. My abasement, of which I am now ashamed, seemed to me grandeur. He had fascinated me; that's my excuse.

Friday.

He is really very handsome. His language is elegant; his mind is one of remarkable superiority. My dearest, he is as learned and logical as Bossuet when explaining to me the mechanism of not only the Spanish language, but the action of human thought on all languages. French seems to be his mother-tongue. When I showed my surprise at this, he told me that he came to France with the king of Spain when very young, and stayed at Valençay.

What a change has taken place in his soul! He is no longer the same man. He now comes simply dressed, but exactly as a *grand seigneur* should be when he goes out on foot in the morning. His wit shines like a beacon-light throughout the lesson; he displays great eloquence. Like a weary man who has suddenly recovered strength, he has betrayed a soul hitherto hidden. He told me the story of a poor footman who let himself be killed merely to obtain one look from a queen of Spain. "What else could he do but die?" I said. That answer seemed to fill his heart with joy, and his eyes positively frightened me.

That evening I went to a ball at the Duchesse de Lenoncourt's. The Prince de Talleyrand was there. I asked Monsieur de Vandenesse (a charming young man) to inquire of the prince whether he had received an Henarez among his guests at Valençay, in 1809. Henarez, it appears, is the Moorish name of the Soria family, who were, they say, originally Abencerrages converted to Christianity. The old duke and his two sons accompanied Ferdinand VII. into exile. The eldest son, the present Duc de Soria, has just been deprived of all property, titles, and honors by the king on account of some private animosity. The ostensible cause was that the duke committed the immense mistake of accepting a constitutional ministry under Valdez. Luckily, he escaped from Cadiz before the

entry of Monseigneur le Duc d'Angoulême, who, in spite of his good-will, could not have saved him from the anger of the king.

All this, which the Vicomte de Vandenesse repeated to me *verbatim* from the lips of the Prince de Talleyrand, gave me much to think about. I can't tell you with what anxiety I awaited my next lesson, which took place this morning. During the first quarter of an hour I examined Henarez, asking myself whether he were duke or bourgeois, without coming to any conclusion. He seemed to guess my thoughts as they rose, and to take pleasure in baffling them.

At last I could stand it no longer; I shut up the book hastily, stopped the translation that I was making aloud, and said to him in Spanish: "You are deceiving us, monsieur; you are not a poor bourgeois refugee; you are the Duc de Soria."

"Mademoiselle," he answered in a sad tone, "Unhappily for me, I am not the Duc de Soria."

I understood the despair he put into those words, "unhappily for me." Ah! my dearest, I defy any other man to put so much passion and so many things into three short words. He lowered his eyes and dared not look at me.

"Monsieur de Talleyrand," I said, "in whose house you spent those years of exile, declares that there is no alternative for an Henarez, — he must either be the Duc de Soria lately exiled again, or a servant of the family."

He raised his head and showed me two black and glowing eyes, flaming with pride and yet humiliated; the man seemed to me in torture.

"My father was in truth a servant of the king of Spain," he said.

Griffith did n't understand this way of studying; long pauses occurred between each question and answer. At last I said point-blank: —

"Are you noble or bourgeois?"

"You are doubtless aware, mademoiselle, that everybody in Spain, even the beggars, are noble."

Such caution made me impatient. Since my last lesson I had written a composition in which my imagination had amused itself. It was in the form of a letter from a friend, and in it I gave an ideal portrait of the man by whom I wished to be loved. I intended to give it to him to translate into Spanish. Hitherto I had always translated from Spanish into French, and never from French into Spanish. I now called his attention to this and asked him to show me how to do it. Then I asked Griffith to go to my room and fetch the letter I had received that morning from a friend. "I shall see," thought I, "what effect my programme of love has upon him, and what kind of blood flows in his veins." I took the paper from Griffith, saying, "See how clearly I have copied it" (for it was all in my handwriting). Then I held out to him the paper, or,

if you choose to call it so, the trap, and I watched him while he read it. Here it is: —

"The man who will please me, dearest, must be proud and haughty with men, but gentle with women. His piercing eye must instantly repress everything that approaches to ridicule. He will have a smile of pity for those who jest on sacred things, which are, in truth, the poesy of the heart, and without which life would be a sad reality. I have a profound contempt for those who endeavor to take from us the living spring of religious ideas which are so fruitful in consolation. Therefore his beliefs must be simple as those of a child, resting on the unshakable convictions of a man of intellect who has examined his reasons for belief. His mind, fresh and original, will be without affectation or pretence; he can say nothing intrusive or out of place; it will be as impossible for him to bore others as to bore himself, because he will always have in his own soul rich depths.

"All his thoughts will be of a noble nature, elevated, chivalrous, without egotism. In all his actions the total absence of self-interest and calculation will be noticeable. His defects will come from the very extent of his ideas, which will be beyond his time. In all things I must find him in advance of his epoch. Full of delicate attentions to the feeble, he will be good to all

women, but very difficult to render in love with any one woman; he will regard that question as too serious to treat lightly. It may be that he will pass his whole life without loving, while possessing in himself all the qualities best calculated to inspire a deep passion. But if he once finds his ideal of womanhood, whom he has seen in his waking dreams, if he meets the being who understands him, who fills his soul and casts upon his life the rays of happiness, who shines to him like a star through the dark, cold, icy clouds of this world, who gives a fresh, new charm to his existence and makes the silent chords within him vibrate, — then it is surely useless to say he will know how to recognize and appreciate his happiness. He will render that woman happy. Never, by word or look will he wound the loving heart which gives itself into his hands with the blind confidence of a child asleep in its mother's arms; for if that heart were awakened from so sweet a dream it would be rent in twain, — it could never embark on that ocean without putting all its future on the venture.

"This man will necessarily have the demeanor, countenance, carriage, and manner of doing even the smallest things which characterize superior beings who are simple and without assumption. He may be ugly, but his hands will be beautiful; his upper lip will be slightly curled with an ironical and disdainful smile for the common and the indifferent; he will reserve for

those he loves the bright celestial rays of a glance full of soul."

"Will mademoiselle," he said in Spanish and in a voice of emotion, "permit me to keep this paper in memory of her? This is the last lesson I shall have the honor of giving her; and that which I receive from this letter may become my eternal rule of conduct. I left Spain a fugitive, without money; but I have now received from my family a sum sufficient for my needs. I shall have the honor to send some poor Spaniard to take my place as teacher."

These words seemed to me to mean, "The play has lasted long enough."

He rose with extreme dignity, and left me somewhat confounded by this delicacy in a man of his class. Then he went downstairs and asked to see my father. At dinner my father said, smiling: —

"Louise, you have been taking lessons of a Spanish grandee, an ex-minister of the king of Spain and a man condemned to death."

"Yes, the Duc de Soria," I replied.

"Duke, no," said my father, "he is no longer that; he now takes the title of Baron de Macumer, from a domain he still retains in Sardinia. He strikes me as very original."

"Don't insult with that word, which means sarcasm

and contempt when you say it, a man who is your equal, and who has," I added, "a noble soul."

"Madame la Baronne de Macumer," said my father, giving me one of his sarcastic looks.

I dropped my eyes.

"Dear me!" said my mother, "Henarez must have met the Spanish ambassador on the portico."

"Yes," replied my father. "The ambassador asked me if I was conspiring against the king, his master. But for all that he bowed to the ex-grandee with much deference, and declared that he put himself at his orders."

All this, my dear Renée, happened two weeks ago, and for fifteen days I have not seen the man who loves me — for he does love me. What is he doing? I would I were a fly, a mouse, a sparrow. I would I could see him, alone, in his own room, without his perceiving me. There's a man to whom I could say: "Go, die for me!" and he would go; at least, I think so. And so — so, Renée, there is a man in Paris of whom I think; whose glance can inundate my soul with light. Oh! he's an enemy, I must tread him under my feet. What! can there be a man without whom I cannot live, — a man who is necessary to me? You marry, and I — love! At the end of four short months how these white doves who flew so high have fallen into the slough of reality!

Sunday.

Last night at the Italian opera I felt I was looked at; my eyes were magnetically attracted by two eyes of fire, shining like two carbuncles, in a dark corner of the orchestra. Henarez never took his eyes from me. The monster chose the one spot from which he could see me, and there he stayed. I don't care what he is in politics, but he has the genius of love. Renée, "behold the point we now have reached," as the great Corneille saith.

XIII.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADEMOISELLE DE CHAULIEU.

La Crampade, February.

My dear Louise, — Before writing to you I did well to wait. But now that I know, or rather have learned, many things, I ought to tell them to you for your future happiness. There is so much difference between a young girl and a married woman that the young girl can no more conceive of the latter than the married woman can return to girlhood.

I preferred to become the wife of Louis de l'Estorade rather than return to the convent. That 's the plain truth. After making quite sure that if I did not marry Louis I should return to the convent, I resigned myself,

as girls say. Having resigned myself, I set to work to examine my situation, so as to make the best of it.

At first the serious nature of the engagements I was taking filled me with terror. Marriage is a thing for life, whereas falling in love is only a matter of pleasure; marriage has to last after those pleasures have disappeared, and it gives birth to interests far more dear than those which first unite a man and woman. Perhaps nothing more is really needed for a happy marriage than a sincere friendship, which covers many human imperfections with its harmonies. Nothing stood in the way of my having such a friendship with Louis de l'Estorade. Having determined not to expect in marriage the joys of that love about which we used to think so often and with such dangerous enthusiasm, I began to feel a sort of gentle tranquillity within me. "If I cannot have love," I said to myself, "why not seek for happiness. Besides, I am loved, and I will let myself be loved. My marriage will not be servitude; on the contrary, I shall always be in a position to command. What objection can there be to that state of things, for a woman who desires to remain the absolute mistress of herself?"

The difficult question of being married without marriage was settled in a conversation between Louis and me, in which he disclosed the excellence of his character and the sweetness of his soul. My dearest, I

wanted to remain in that beautiful period of the hope and growth of love which leaves to the soul its virginity. To grant nothing to mere duty, to the law, to follow one's own impulse only, to keep my freedom of will — ah! that was surely a good and noble thing! This agreement, which is against that of the laws, and of the sacrament itself, could only pass between Louis and myself.

This difficulty — the first that I perceived — was all that caused the slight delay in my marriage. If at the outset I was resolved to accept everything rather than return to the convent, it is natural that I should want to obtain all I could after making up my mind to the worst; and then you know, dear, you and I want all things! I examined Louis as best I could, saying to myself: "Have misfortunes made him good or bad, kind or harsh?" By dint of watching him I discovered that his love amounted to worship. When I once felt myself uplifted to the position of an idol, when I saw him turn pale and tremble at a look, I felt that I might dare all. I drew him apart in one of our country walks and cautiously questioned him. I made him talk to me; I asked for his ideas, his plans, what he expected our future to be. My questions seemed to him such proofs of reflection, and touched so precisely on the weak spots of that dreadful dual life, that Louis, as he has since told me, was alarmed at such reasoning in a girl.

As for me, I listened to his answers; they were confused and involved, like those of a person who has lost his self-possession; and I presently discovered that fate had given me an adversary who was less able than I just because he divined, what you used to call so magniloquently, my great soul. Poor fellow! broken by sufferings and privation he looks upon himself as a wreck, and, as he told me, three fears overcame him. In the first place, he is thirty-seven and I am seventeen, and he looked with horror on the twenty years difference between us. Then, it is agreed and understood that I am very beautiful, and Louis could not help seeing and knowing regretfully that sufferings have robbed him of his youth. Besides all that, he felt me to be superior as a woman to himself as a man. Forced into distrust of himself by these three visible inferiorities, he feared he was not fit to make me happy and was only accepted by me as a *pis aller*. He said to me one evening, hesitatingly, that I would not have taken him unless to escape the convent.

"That is true," I answered gravely. My dear friend, he then caused me the first great emotion of all those that come to us through men. I was struck to the heart when I saw two heavy tears rolling from his eyes.

"Louis," I said in a comforting voice, "it depends on you to make this marriage of convenience a marriage

to which I can give my fullest consent. What I am going to ask of you requires a far greater abnegation on your part than the utmost devotion of your love, sincere as that may be. Can you, will you rise to friendship such as I understand it? We can have but one real friend in life, and I would fain be yours. Friendship is the bond between two equal souls, uniting their strength, but nevertheless, independent. Let us be friends and partners, bearing our life together. Leave me my independence. I do not forbid you to inspire in me the love you say you feel for me; but I do not wish to be your wife until I feel I can be. When that time comes I will obey the feeling instantly. I do not ask you to make this friendship cold, or to refrain from troubling it with words of love; I will try, myself, to make our affection perfect. I do not wish to seem to you capricious or prudish, for that I am not; and I think you too much of an honorable gentleman not to save me from all outward remark, and to keep up, at any rate, the appearances of marriage."

My dear, I have never seen any one so happy as Louis when I made him my proposition; his eyes shone; happiness seemed to have quenched his tears.

"Be sure of one thing," I added; "there is nothing fantastic in what I ask of you. It comes from my immense desire to gain your esteem. If you owed me only to marriage, to legal and religious formalities,

would you always be as glad as if your love were crowned by me? And think, if I became your wife and a mother through passive obedience, as my dear, honored mother tells me I should — if I had a child, do you think I could love it as if it were the son of my will and heart? It may not be necessary for us to please each other as much as lovers seek to do, but remember that we must not displease each other. We are about to enter upon a trying and dangerous situation. We are to live in the country; we ought to guard against all instability of feelings. Let us make our lives of an even tenor; wise hearts can surely forearm themselves against disillusions, and the misery of changed feelings."

He was greatly surprised to find that I had reasoned out this matter in my own mind, but he made me a solemn promise; after which I took his hand and pressed it affectionately.

We were married the following week. Sure of keeping my liberty I threw myself gayly into all the insipid preparations for the various ceremonies. I was able to be my own natural self, and I've no doubt everybody thought I was a *deep one*, — to use one of our Blois expressions. They took me, I know, for a shrewd girl; though in reality I was only delighted with a new situation and the many resources I had managed to provide myself with. Dearest, I had seen, as in a vision, the difficulties of my life, and I longed sincerely

to make the happiness of that man. Now, it is certain that living in solitude as we shall do, if a woman does not maintain her supremacy marriage must become intolerable in the long run. Conjugal love, as I conceive it, should clothe a woman with hope, should render her supreme, should give her an inexhaustible vital force, a warmth of life which is able to bring all things to fruition around her. The more she is mistress of herself, the more able she is to bring love and happiness into the world.

I have exacted a promise from Louis that the deepest secrecy shall surround our internal arrangements. A man who is thought to be controlled by a woman (as the world regards it) is justly open to ridicule. The influence of a woman should be absolutely secret; it is a mystery; in all things our gift lies there. Having undertaken to raise this broken nature, to restore the qualities I see in it to their pristine lustre, I desire that the results I obtain should seem to come spontaneously from Louis himself. Such is the task I set before me; it is a fine one, and it suffices for a woman's glory. I am almost proud of this secret thought which fills my life, this plan on which my efforts will all be spent, while known to none but God and you.

I may say now that I am almost happy; and perhaps I should not be as happy if I could not tell all I feel to

a beloved friend — for I cannot tell it to him; my happiness would wound him, and therefore I must hide it. He has, my dearest, the delicacy of a woman, like all men who have suffered much. For two months we remained to each other what we were before our marriage. I studied, as you can well imagine, a crowd of little personal questions, on which love depends far more than we think. In spite of my coldness, that suffering soul expanded; I saw his face change its expression and grow young again. The elegance I brought into the house cast its reflections on his whole person and transformed it. Insensibly I grew accustomed to him; I made him another myself. I discovered as I watched him the correspondence of his soul to his countenance. The animal we call a husband — that 's your expression — disappeared. At last I found — on some sweet evening, but I do not well know which, a lover whose words went to my soul and on whose arm I rested with unspeakable pleasure; nothing seemed lacking to our love, neither the delicacy nor the mysterious grace which our imaginations, dear, had always asked for it.

I will admit to you, that in spite of all this, again I stipulated for my liberty of will. I cannot tell you all my reasons, and yours is certainly the only soul into which I could pour this semi-confidence. Even when belonging wholly to one's husband, beloved or not, I

think we lose much by not concealing our sentiments and the judgment that we form of marriage. For myself, the only joy that I have had, but that is celestial, comes from the certainty of bringing back to life this suffering soul intrusted to me. Louis has renewed his youth and strength; his gayety has returned to him; he is no longer the same man. I have wiped out, like a fairy, even the memory of his sufferings. I have metamorphosed him; he has grown charming. Sure of pleasing me, his mind unfolds and displays all sorts of new qualities.

To be the living principle of a man's welfare when that man knows it and mingles gratitude with love — ah! dearest, that certainty develops a power in the soul which surpasses that of love, so-called. That impetuous and lasting power, one, yet diverse, generates the Family, that glorious work of womanhood, which I now am able to perceive in all its fruitful beauty.

The old father is no longer miserly; he gives me blindly all I wish. The servants are gay and cheerful. Louis's happiness shines upon this home in which I reign by love. The old count enters heartily into all the improvements. Not to seem a blot on my luxury, he has lately adopted, just to please me, the dress, and with the dress the manners of the present day. We have English horses, a coupé, a calèche and a tilbury.

Our servants are in plain clothes, but very stylish. I give all my mind — I 'm not joking — to the business of managing my household with due economy, and providing it with as much enjoyment as I can at the least possible cost.

I have already put into Louis's head the necessity of making roads, so as to deserve the reputation of a man concerned in the welfare of his neighborhood. I have also spurred him on to increase his mental attainments. I hope to see him before long a member of the council-general of the department, through the influence of my family and that of his own mother. I have told him plainly that I am ambitious, that I think it a very good plan for his father to continue the management of our property, and make our savings for us, because I want him wholly devoted to politics; I wish that to be his career, and then, if we have children, I shall see them happy and useful in serving the State. I told him that he must, on pain of losing my esteem and affection, be elected deputy from the department at the coming elections. My family will help his canvass, and if he succeeds we shall pass our winters in Paris. Ah! my darling, I wish you could have seen with what ardor he obeyed me! I saw then how much he loved me. Yesterday he wrote me the following letter from Marseille, whither he had gone for only a few hours: —

"When you permitted me to love you, my tender Renée, I began to believe in happiness; but now I see no end to it. The past is no longer anything but a vague memory, a shadow needed to bring forth the splendor of that happiness. When I am near you, love transports me to the point of depriving me of the power of expressing it; I can then only admire and adore you. Words come to me when we are parted. You are beautiful indeed, with a beauty so grave, so majestic, that time will scarcely alter it; and though the love of a married pair does not depend as much on beauty as on feelings — which are exquisite in you — let me tell you here that the certainty of seeing you always beautiful gives me a delight which increases with every glance I cast upon you. The harmony and the dignity of the lines of your face, which reveals your noble soul, show something unspeakably pure beneath the ivory tones of the skin. The light in your black eyes and the frank outline of your brow tell of lofty virtues, of steadfast loyalty, of a heart made to meet the storms of life should any come. Nobility is the distinctive quality of your nature; I do not pretend to inform you of this; I simply write it to show you that I know the full value of the treasure I possess.

"The little that you grant me is and will be happiness, in years to come, as at present; for I feel all that there is of grandeur in the promise we have made to respect each other's liberty. We shall be free in spite of the tie, the close chain that binds us; we shall owe each proof of tenderness to the loving will of the one who grants it. I shall be all the more proud of winning you thus because I now know the value you attach to that conquest.

"You can never speak or breathe, or act or think without exciting, more and more, the admiration that I feel for the

graces of your soul and of your body. There is something in you — I know not what it is — something divine, wise, enchanting, which joins in one accord, reflection, honor, pleasure, hope; in other words, which gives to love an extent, an horizon, greater than that of this life. Oh! my angel, may the genius of love be faithful to me, and may the future be ever full of that pure passion by the help of which you have embellished my whole existence.

"When thou art a mother I shall see thee proud of the vigor of thy life, I shall hear thee, in that voice so sweet, with those ideas so delicate, so new, so carefully well-rendered, blessing the love that has refreshed my soul, redeemed my faculties and is my pride, that love from which I draw, as from a magic well-spring, a new life. I am indeed another being. Yes, I will be all you wish me to be; I will become a man who is useful to our country; and on you shall shine the glory, the cause and principle of which will be your approval."

Dear, that is how I am forming him. The style is a little fresh; but a year hence he 'll do better. Louis is in the first transports; but I know he will come to that equable and continued sensation of happiness which a happy marriage brings when a woman and a man, knowing themselves thoroughly and sure of one another, have found the secret of varying the infinite and of putting charm into the very foundations of their life. This glorious secret of truly wedded pairs I see it, and I wish to possess it. Please observe that he thinks himself loved, — ah, the conceit of man! — loved

as though he were not my husband. However, I am not yet beyond that amount of attachment which gives us strength to bear many things. And yet, Louis is most amiable, he has great equability of character; he does *simply* actions which other men would boast of. If I do not love him, he is at least very dear to me.

So, dearest, behold the black hair and the black eyes and what you call my imperial air and person elevated to the rank of sovereign power. Perhaps a few years from now you and I will be laughing together happily in Paris; whence I shall bring you back sometimes to my beautiful oasis in Provence. Oh, Louise! don't lose the beautiful future we could have together. Don't commit those follies your last letter threatened me with. I have married an old young man; do you find some young old one in the Chamber of peers and marry him. That 's in the line of your career — but that Spaniard? oh, no!

XIV.

THE DUC DE SORIA TO THE BARON DE MACUMER.

MADRID.

MY DEAR BROTHER, — You cannot make me Duc de Soria, without my acting as the Duc de Soria. If I had to think of you as a wanderer, without the comforts that money gives, my happiness would be intolerable to

me. Neither Marie nor I are willing to marry until we know that you accept the sum we have sent you by Urraca. These two millions are the fruit of your own economy and Marie's.

We have prayed for your happiness kneeling together before the altar; and with what fervor! ah, God alone knows that! My brother! surely our prayers will be granted. The love that you seek, the consolation of your exile, will come to you from heaven. Marie wept as she read your letter; you have her utmost admiration.

As for me, I accept your proposal for the sake of our house, but not for my own sake. The king behaved exactly as you expected. Ah, you flung him his satisfaction so disdainfully, as a keeper flings meat to a tiger, that, to avenge you, I longed to make him feel how you had crushed him by your grandeur.

The only thing that I have taken for myself, dear beloved brother, is my happiness, my Marie. For that, I shall ever be to you in my own sight as a creature before his Creator. There will be in my life and in Marie's one day as perfect as that of our happy marriage; I mean the one on which we hear that your heart is understood, that a woman loves you as you should be, as you desire to be loved.

Do not forget that if, as you say, you live in us, we live in you. You can write to us safely under cover

to the Nuncio, sending your letters via Rome. The French ambassador in Rome will no doubt transmit them to the Secretary of State, Monsignore Bemboni, who will receive instructions from the legate. All other ways of communicating would be dangerous.

Adieu, dear exile, dear despoiled one. Be proud of the happiness you have given us if you cannot be happy in it; but God will surely hear our prayers for you.

FERNANDO.

XV.

LOUISE DE CHAULIEU TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

AH! my angel, how philosophical marriage has made you! Your dear face must have turned yellow when you wrote me all those dreadful thoughts about human life and our duties.

Do you seriously think you will convert me to a humdrum marriage by this programme of underground labors? Alas! alas! is it to this that all our wise meditations on life and love have brought you? We left the convent clothed with our innocence and armed at all points with reflections; and yet the lance of this first and purely mental experience of things has got through our armor and staggered you. If I did not

know you for the purest and most angelic creature in the world I should say that your calculations showed actual depravity. My dearest, can it be that in the interests of this country life of yours you mean to put your happiness in a pint pot, and treat love as you might your timber! Oh, I'd rather perish through the violent convulsions of my heart than live in the dreariness of your virtuous arithmetic.

You and I are both educated girls, — educated from having deeply reflected on a few things; but, my dearest, philosophy without love, or with a poor or false love, is the most horrible of conjugal hypocrisies. I am afraid the greatest simpleton on earth would sooner or later discover the owl of wisdom blinking in your bower of roses, — a discovery so little encouraging that it is likely to put to flight the warmest passion. You are making destiny for yourself instead of letting it make you. How strangely we two are being twirled about! Much philosophy and little love is your drift; much love and no philosophy is mine. The Julie of Jean-Jacques, whom I was thinking a dreadful pedant, is a mere ignoramus compared to you. Virtue of womanhood! why, you've measured life from top to toe!

Alas! I am laughing at you, and perhaps you are right. You have immolated your youth in a single day, and you'll have the vices of age before your time. I

dare say your Louis will be happy. If he loves you, — and I don't doubt he does, — he may never find out that you have behaved in the interests of your family, just as we are told courtesans behave in the interests of their own fortunes; they make men happy, — at least it seems so by the way men go on. A clear-sighted husband would, of course, always continue to love you; but won't he dispense with gratitude to a woman who makes deception a sort of moral corset, as necessary to her life as an ordinary corset to her body?

My dearest, love is to my eyes the principle of all virtues gathered into that image of the Divine. Love, like all principles, cannot be estimated and measured; it is the infinite of our souls. Have n't you been trying to justify to yourself the dreadful position of a girl married to a man she can only esteem? Duty, that 's your rule and measure; but to do your duty from necessity is the morality of atheists; to do it from love, from sentiment, that is the secret law of womanhood. You have made yourself the man, and your Louis will soon find himself the woman.

Oh! my dear Renée, your letter has plunged me into endless meditation. I see plainly that a convent can never take the place of a mother to girls. I entreat you, my noble angel with the black eyes, so pure and proud, so grave, so elegant, think over these first outcries your letter has wrung from me. I am try-

ing to console myself with the thought that at this very moment, while I am lamenting, love may have knocked over all your sage scaffoldings. Well, I might do worse without reasoning, without calculating; passion is an element which may have a logic as cruel as yours.

Monday.

Last night, before going to bed, I sat down at my window to look at the sky, which was sublimely pure. The stars were like silver nails holding up the azure veil. In the silence of the night I could hear the sound of breathing, and by the half-light from the heavens I saw my Spaniard, perched like a squirrel in the branches of a tree on the boulevard, contemplating, no doubt, my windows. The first effect of this discovery was to drive me into the farther corner of my room, with my hands and feet almost paralyzed; but deep below that first sensation of fear, I felt a joy ineffable.

Not one of those clever Frenchmen who want to marry me would think of clambering into an elm at the risk of being seized by the watchman. My Spaniard had probably been there a good long time. Ah! he does not choose to give me any more lessons, but he needs one himself; and he shall have it! If he only knew what I have said to myself about his apparent ugliness! I assure you, Renée, I've been philosophizing, too. It occurred to me that there was something

dreadful in loving handsome men. Is n't it admitting that the senses count for three fourths of love, which ought to be wholly divine?

So, when I got a little over my first fright, I put my head out again to see if he were still there, and I was well punished for it. With some sort of tube he fired a letter artistically rolled up in a leaden ball through the window. "Good heavens!" I thought, "can he suppose I left my window open for that? But if I shut it suddenly I shall seem to admit it." So I did better; I went back to the window as if I had not heard the noise of his note falling, and as if I had seen nothing. Then I said aloud, "Do come here, Griffith, and look at the stars," — Griffith being sound asleep, like a true old maid as she is.

When the Moor heard me he glided down with the rapidity of a shadow. He must have been half-dead with fright, like myself, for I did not hear him walk away, and I dare say he stayed crouching at the foot of the elm. After a good quarter of an hour, during which time I bathed in the blue of heaven and floundered in the ocean of curiosity, I closed my window and jumped into bed to unroll my note with all the care they give to the papyri in Naples. My fingers touched fire. "What horrible power is this that man exercises over me?" I said to myself, and I put the paper to a candle thinking to burn it; then a thought

restrained me. What could he have to say to me secretly? However, my dear, I did burn his letter unread, thinking that if all the other girls in the universe would have devoured it, I, Armande-Louise-Marie de Chaulieu could not and would not do so.

The next night, at the Italiens, there he was at his post! But, constitutional minister that he once was, I am certain he did not detect by any movement or attitude of mine the agitation in my soul; I behaved precisely as if nothing had happened the night before. I was satisfied with myself; but I must say he looked rather sad. Poor man! it is so natural in Spain to make love through the windows. During the acts he walked about the corridor. The secretary of the Spanish legation saw him there and told me an act of his that is really sublime. Being Duc de Soria he was to have married one of the richest heiresses of Spain, the young Princess Marie Heredia, whose fortune would have lessened the trials of his exile. But it seems that contrary to the will of their parents, who had betrothed them in childhood, Marie loved the younger brother; and my Felipe gave her up to him, and allowed the king of Spain to take his own rank and fortune away from him and give them to this brother.

I said to the young secretary, "He probably did it in the simplest manner."

"Then you know him?" he said naïvely. My mother smiled.

"What will become of him now?" I asked. "I am told he is condemned to death."

"Yes, in Spain; but he can live in Sardinia. The King of Sardinia granted him a passport as Baron de Macumer, — though not without making some difficulty," added the young diplomat. "But he is really a Sardinian subject. He has magnificent feudal estates on the island, with power of life and death. He has a palace at Sassari. If Ferdinand VII. dies, Macumer will enter diplomacy, and the court of Turin will give him an embassy. Though young —"

"Young? is he young?" I said.

"Yes, Mademoiselle; though young, he is one of the most distinguished men in Spain."

I was turning my opera-glass round the theatre as the secretary spoke, and seemed to be paying him very little attention; but, between ourselves, I was in despair at having burned that letter. I wonder how such a man expresses himself when he loves — and he *does* love me. To be loved, adored in secret! to have in this audience, made up of all the greatest men in Paris, a man, a great man, of my own, and no one to know it! Oh, Renée, I began to see the use of balls and parties, and to feel that other people are necessary to one's love, if only to sacrifice them all to the beloved. I felt a new and happy being within me. All my vanities, my self-love, my pride were being stroked. God knows what sort of a glance I cast about me.

"Ah! you sly puss!" whispered my mother, smiling.

Yes, my very shrewd mother detected a secret joy in my behavior; I was forced to lower my flag to that astute woman. Those four words of hers taught me more of the science of the world than I have learned in a year — for here it is March. Alas! the Italian opera will be over in a month. What will become of me without that divine music if my heart is full of love?

My dear, when I went home I opened my window, with the resolution of a Chaulieu, to look at a heavy shower. Oh! if men only knew the powerful seduction they exercise over us by heroic deeds what great things they would do; even cowards would be heroes. What I had just heard of my Spaniard had put me into a fever. I was certain he was there — waiting to throw me another letter. This time I did not burn it. I read it.

Here, Madame philosopher, is the first love-letter I ever received; now we have each had one: —

Louise, I do not love you because of your sublime beauty; I do not love you because of your broad mind, the nobility of your sentiments, the infinite grace you impart to all things; nor yet because of your pride, your regal disdain for all that is not within your sphere, — a disdain which does not, in you, exclude kindness, for your charity is that of the angels. Louise, I love you because you have stooped from those proud grandeurs to comfort a poor exile; with a glance, a gesture, you have consoled a man for being so far beneath

you that he could ask nothing but your pity, your generous pity. You are the only woman in the world who has ever softened for me the hard indifference of her eyes; and since that beneficent glance fell upon me — on me but a grain of dust — and I obtained that which I never had in my days of power and grandeur, I have longed to tell you, Louise, how dear you are to me, and that I love you for yourself without one ulterior thought; in this I go far beyond the conditions you yourself have given to a perfect love.

Learn, then, idol placed by me in highest heaven, that there is in this world a last descendant of the Saracens whose life belongs to you; from whom you can ask all as from a slave; who will be honored in his own eyes by doing your bidding. I have given myself to you forever, — solely for the joy of giving that self in return for one glance, one motion of your hand stretched out *one morning* to your Spanish teacher. You have a servant, Louise, and nothing else. No, I dare not think that I can ever be loved; but perhaps you will endure my presence because of my devotion.

Since that morning when you smiled to me, as a noble maiden divining the wretchedness of my solitary and betrayed heart, I have enthroned you; you are the sovereign mistress of my life, the queen of my thoughts, the divinity of my soul, the light that shines within me, the flower of my flowers, the fragrance of the air I breathe, the richness of my blood, the softness of my slumber. A single thought troubles this happiness. You are still ignorant that you have beside you a limitless devotion, a faithful heart, a blind slave, a mute servant, a fortune, — for I am now but the depositary of all that I possess; all is yours. You do not know that you own a heart to which you can trust all;

the heart of a parent from whom you can ask all, to whom you may look by right for protection; the heart of a friend, the heart of a brother. All the true sentiments of such hearts are lacking to your life; I see that. I have detected the secret of your home, your isolation!

My boldness comes from my desire to let you see the extent of your possessions. Accept all, Louise; in so doing you will give me the only life there is for me in this world, — that of absolute devotion. In placing the badge of servitude around my neck you risk nothing. I will never ask anything from you but the happiness of knowing myself yours. Do not even tell me that you cannot love me; it must be so, — I know that. I know that I must love from afar, without hope and for my love's sake only.

I would fain know whether you consent to accept me as your servant, and I have sought for some means to make this known to me which shall not infringe upon your dignity. Will you answer me to-morrow evening at the opera-house by holding in your hand a white and a red camellia, — the image of a man's blood at the orders of a purity he adores; that shall be my answer. At all times, ten years hence, as to-morrow, whatever you wish that is possible for a man to do, shall be done when you ask it of

Your happy servant,

Felipe Henarez.

My dear, please admit that the great seigneurs know how to love. He bounds like an African lion! What restrained ardor, what faith, what sincerity, what grandeur of soul in his humility! I felt very small, and I asked myself in a bewildered way, "What 's to be done?"

It is the privilege of a great man to upset all ordinary calculations. He is sublime and touching and artless and gigantic. In one single letter he has gone far beyond all those of Lovelace, and Saint-Preux as well. Oh, here 's true love! — no shams or trickery here! Love is or is not; and when it *is*, it appears in all its immensity.

So here I am, compelled to lay aside my coquetry. Refuse, or accept! I am held between those two terms without a pretext to shelter irresolution. All discussion is denied. It is not Paris, it is Spain, it is the East, — yes, it is the Saracen who speaks, who kneels before the Catholic Eve and offers her his scimitar, his horse, his head. Shall I accept this Moorish relic?

Read and reread that Saracenically Spanish letter, my Renée, and you 'll see that true love is worth more than all the Judaic stipulations of your philosophy. Renée! Renée your letter weighs on my heart; you 've commonplaced all life for me. Why should I mind you? Why should I play any such part as you advise? Am I not eternally mistress of this lion who subdues his roars to worshipping sighs? Oh! but how much he must have roared all to himself in his den in the rue Hillerin-Bertin! I know where he lives, I have his card: F. Baron de Macumer.

Well, he has deprived me of all chance of arguing the matter; there is nothing I can do but fling those

camellias at his head. What infernal cleverness love, pure, true, artless love, possesses! It seems the noblest thing on earth to the heart of a poor woman helplessly reduced to simple and easy action. Oh, the East! I've read the Arabian Nights and this is the very essence of it: two flowers, and all is said! We've done fourteen volumes of Clarissa Harlowe with a single posy! I twist and twirl before that letter, like a bit of twine in the fire. To take or not to take those two camellias? Yes, or no; kill, or make alive!

A voice cries to me, "Test him!" — yes, I'll test him.

XVI.

SAME TO SAME.

I AM dressed — in white, with white camellias in my hair and a white camellia in my hand; my mother carries red ones, and I can take one from her if I want to. I have a desperate desire to sell him his red camellia at the price of some agony. I shall hesitate; in fact, I really sha'n't decide till I am on the ground.

I am lovely. Griffith begged me to let her look at me for a few minutes. The solemnity of this occasion, the drama of this consent, has brought the color into my cheeks. I've *two* red camellias there side by side with the white ones.

One o'clock.

I was much admired; but one man adored me. He dropped his head on his breast when he saw the white camellia in my hand; but I saw him turn as white as the flower itself when I took a red camellia from my mother's bunch. To come with the two flowers might have been accidental, but the action of taking one was an answer; it was even beyond what was asked of me. The opera was "Romeo and Juliet;" but as you don't know what the duet between the two lovers is, you can't understand the happiness of two neophytes of love as they listened to that divine expression of tenderness.

I 've gone to bed listening to steps pacing the sidewalk of the boulevard. Oh! my dear angel, fire is in my heart, in my head. What is he doing? what is he thinking? Has he thoughts that I know nothing of? Will he really be the slave forever he talks about? How can I make sure? Can he have the slightest feeling in his heart that my acceptance lacked dignity? What *is* he thinking, in short? I am delivered over to the quibbling discussions of those women of "The Grand Cyrus" — to all the subtleties of the Courts of Love. Does he know that in love the slightest actions of women are the result of a world of reflections, inward struggles, lost victories? Oh, what is he thinking of at this moment? How can I reach him? how can

I order him to write me every evening the history of his day? He is my slave, and I can make him do what I choose. Yes, I 'll overwhelm him with work.

Sunday morning.

I could not sleep till morning. It is now twelve o'clock and I have made Griffith write the following letter:—

To Monsieur le Baron de Macumer:

Mademoiselle de Chaulieu desires me, Monsieur le baron, to request that you will return to me the copy of a letter, written to her by one of her friends and copied in her handwriting, which you have carried away with you.

Receive, etc.

S. Griffith.

My dear, Griffith departed to the rue Hillerin-Bertin; she gave her missive to my slave, who returned my epistle in an envelope; it was stained with tears! Oh! my dear, he must have cared for it; but he obeyed me. Any other man would have refused, and written me a charming letter full of flatteries. But the Saracen did what he promised to do, — he obeyed; I cried about it.

XVII.

SAME TO SAME.

April 2.

YESTERDAY the weather was superb; I dressed myself like a girl beloved who wants to please. My father has given me, at my request, the prettiest little equipage you can imagine, — dapple-gray horses and a calèche of the utmost elegance. I tried it to-day for the first time. I must say I looked like a flower under a parasol lined with white silk.

As I drove up the Avenue des Champs-Élysées I saw my Abencerrage riding toward me on a horse of wonderful beauty. The men (who nowadays make themselves look like grooms) all stopped to look at him. He bowed to me, and I made him a little sign of encouragement; he slackened his pace beside the carriage so that I was able to say: —

"I hope you were not annoyed, Monsieur le baron, that I asked for that letter? It must be useless to you, for," I added in a low voice, "you have gone beyond its programme. You have a horse there which makes you very conspicuous." "My bailiff in Sardinia sent him to me," he replied. "The horse has an Arabian pedigree, and was raised on my estate."

This morning, my dear, Macumer rode an English

horse, a chestnut, very handsome though it did not excite the same attention. My few words of sarcasm had sufficed. The Duc d'Angoulême has bought the Arabian. My slave saw that he was stepping out of the simplicity I required by drawing the attention of the crowd upon him. A man should be remarked for himself, and never for his horse or the things about him. To ride too showy a horse seems to me as ridiculous as to wear a great diamond in one's shirt. I was delighted to catch him in a fault, — though perhaps a little vanity might be permitted to a poor exile.

All this nonsense pleases me. Oh! my dear old philosopher, do please enjoy my loves in return for the long faces I pull over your gloomy reasonings. Dear Philip the Second in petticoats, sit here beside me in my pretty carriage; do you see the velvet glance, humble, but intense, proud of its servitude, which a man with a red camellia (my livery) casts upon me as he passes? What a light love casts! How clear are all things to me now! How well I read my Paris! I see the wit and wisdom of it now! Yes, love is sweeter, grander, more charming here than elsewhere. I know now that I could never, never torment a fool nor gain the slightest empire over one. It takes a brilliant man to understand us, and on no other can we play as on an instrument. Oh! poor friend, I forgot! forgive me, there 's your l'Estorade; but then, did n't you tell me

you were going to make a genius of him? Ah, I begin to see why! you are bringing him up on a bottle to make him brilliant enough to understand you some day. Adieu, adieu; I 'm silly, so I won't continue.

XVIII.

MADAME DE L' ESTORADE TO LOUISE DE CHAULIEU.

Dear angel, — Though I ought to say dear demon, — you have grieved me without intending it; if we were not one and the same soul I should say you had wounded me; but we can't wound ourselves, you know.

How plainly I see that you have never once let your thoughts rest seriously on that word *indissoluble*, applied to the contract which binds a woman to a man. I don't wish to contradict philosophers and legislators; they are fully able to contradict themselves; but, dearest, this I must say: by rendering marriage irrevocable and by imposing on all an identical and pitiless rule, they have made of each union a thing by itself absolutely dissimilar from other unions, as dissimilar as individuals are among themselves. Each has its different internal laws; country married life, where two beings are forced to live perpetually in each other's presence, is not the same as city married life, which

distractions color. A household in Paris, where life rushes on like a torrent, cannot be the same as a home in the provinces, where life is less agitated. If conditions vary with places, how much more do they vary according to natures. The wife of a man of genius has only to let him guide her, while the wife of a fool must take the reins and feel herself the more intelligent of the two, under pain of incurring great misfortunes. Perhaps, after all, reason and reflection do lead to what is called vitiation — if vitiation, for us, is the introduction of calculation into feelings. A passion which reasons is vitiated; it is beautiful only when spontaneous, involuntary, in one of those fine gushes of feeling which exclude all egotism.

Ah! sooner or later, my dearest, you will say to yourself: "Yes, deception is as necessary to a woman as her corset, if by deception is meant the silence of her who has the courage to hold her tongue, if by deception is meant the wise calculation of the future. All married women learn to their cost that social laws are incompatible in many points with the laws of nature. We might have a dozen children by marrying as young as we are now; and if we had them it would be a crime: we should bring into the world twelve sorrows; we should deliver over twelve sweet beings to poverty and despair, — whereas two children are two happinesses, two benefits, two creations in har-

mony with the manners, customs, and laws of the present time. Natural law and the Code are antagonistic, and we women are the ground on which they fight. Do you apply the word calculation to the wisdom of a wife who feels bound to watch that the family is not ruined through her? That is a calculation which you will see for yourself some day, Baronne de Macumer, when you are the proud and happy wife of the man who adores you. Or rather, that superior man will save you the calculation by making it for you.

You see, my dear, heedless one, that I have studied the Code in its relations to conjugal love on behalf of both of us. You will some day know that we must give account to none but ourselves and God of the means we employ to perpetuate happiness in the bosom of our homes. Better the judgment and the calculation exercised in that than unreflecting love which ends in weariness, in estrangement, in disunion. Ah! my dear, we have many sublime lies to act in order to be the noble creatures we should be in fulfilling our duty.

You tax me with calculation, that is, with duplicity, because I hold myself in reserve with Louis; but may not too intimate and familiar a knowledge be the cause of disunion? I do try to occupy him much in order to distract him from me, and I do it for his own happiness; that is surely not an evil calculation. If ten-

derness is inexhaustible, the passion of love is not; and it is, believe me, Louise, a true enterprise for an honest woman to wisely distribute it over the whole of life.

At the risk of seeming execrable to you, I must tell you that I persist in my principles, and think them very grand and very generous. Virtue, my darling, is a principle which shows itself differently according to its surroundings; the virtue of Provence, and that of Constantinople, and of London, and of Paris, have totally dissimilar appearances without ceasing to be virtue. The fabric of every human life is woven of threads unlike those of its neighbors, though seen at a certain height they all look alike. If I wished to see Louis unhappy, and bring about an eventual separation both of body and mind, I should cease to maintain my own being, and should put myself at his bidding. I have not had, like you, the happiness of meeting with a superior man, but perhaps I may have the pleasure of making him one. Yes, I'll give you a rendezvous five years hence in Paris, and then perhaps you will tell me that I was mistaken, and that Louis de l'Estorade was always a remarkable man.

As for these glories of love, these great emotions which I feel only through you, as for those nocturnal perches in elm-trees by moonlight, with all their accompanying adoration and worship, I knew I must renounce all that. Yes, my Louise, your blooming into

life is to be what you choose to make it; mine is circumscribed, it is bounded by La Crampade; and yet you reproach me for the precautions which my poor little, fragile happiness requires in order to be rich and lasting and sacred! I wish to put the graces of love into wifehood, and you have almost made me blush for myself. Which of us two is right, which wrong? Perhaps we are both right and both wrong; perhaps society sells our laces and our titles and our children very dear to us.

I too, have my red camellias; they are on my lips, they blossom in smiles for the two beings, father and son, to whom I am devoted, slave and mistress both. But oh! my dearest, your last letters have made me feel what I have lost. They have taught me the extent of the sacrifices of a married woman. I had never seriously looked at that broad, free, beautiful expanse in which you are now bounding, and I don't deny that a tear or two came into my eyes as I read your account of it. But a little regret does n't mean a change of opinion, though it may be cousin-german to it! You say marriage has made me a philosopher. Alas! no; I felt this when those tears came as I read of you, swept onward in a torrent of love. But my father made me read one of the most profound writers of our time, the man who has inherited Bossuet's mantle, — a stern teacher, whose pages compel conviction. While

you have been reading "Corinne," I have been reading Bonald, and there's the whole secret of my philosophy; the Family, sacred and strong, has appeared like a vision before me. I swear by Bonald that your father was right in what he preached to you.

Adieu, my dear imagination, my friend, you who are my romance, my ecstasy!

XIX.

LOUISE DE CHAULIEU TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

You are a love of a woman, my Renée; and now I'll agree that it is fair and honest to be deceitful and calculating; will that satisfy you? Besides, the man who loves us belongs to us, — we have the right to make him a fool or a man of genius; between ourselves, we generally make a fool of him. You are going to make yours a man of genius, and conceal how you do it; two magnificent performances! Ah, if there were no paradise you'd be well caught; for you are devoting yourself to voluntary martyrdom. You are trying to render your man ambitious, and to keep him loving. Child that you are! is n't it enough for *you* to keep him loving? How far is calculation virtue, or is virtue calculation, hey? Well, we won't quarrel over that question; as Bonald is living we can refer it to him. We

are, and we intend to be, virtuous, but oh, Renée, at this moment I think that in spite of your philosophical rascality, you are better than I.

Yes, I 'm a horribly deceitful girl; I love Felipe, and I hide it from him with infamous dissimulation. I 'd give anything to see him jump from that tree to the top of the wall, and from the wall to my balcony; and if he did, I should annihilate him with my disdain. You see how terribly truthful I can be. What stops me from being as true to him? What power hinders me from telling that dear Felipe the happiness his love — his pure, entire, lofty, secret, overflowing love — has poured in floods into my heart?

Madame de Mirbel is painting a miniature of me; when finished, I mean to give it to him, my dear.

A thing that surprises me every day, more and more, is the activity which love brings into life. What interest there is in every hour, every action, in the least little things! and what a delightful jumbling of past and future in the present! We live in all three tenses of the verb. Will this last always? Oh! answer me; tell me what happiness is; does it calm, or irritate? I am filled with a mortal uneasiness; I don't know how to behave; I feel, in my heart, a power which is dragging me toward him, in spite of reason and all social conventions. The contentment Felipe shows in being mine, his love at a distance, his obedi-

ence irritate me, just as his profound respect irritated when he was only my Spanish teacher. I feel inclined to cry out as he rides past me: "Idiot! if you love the mere outside of me, what would it be if you knew me truly?"

Oh! Renée, I hope you burn my letters! I'll burn all yours. If other eyes than our own should read these thoughts that go from my heart to yours, I'd send Felipe to tear them out,— or kill their owners for better safety.

Monday.

Ah! Renée, how can we sound a man's heart? My father is to bring your Vicomte de Bonald to the house and present him to me, and I'll ask him that question; if he is so wise he certainly can answer it. God is fortunate in being able to read all hearts. Am I still an angel to that man? That's the whole question.

If ever, in look, or gesture, or tone of a word, I perceived the slightest diminution of the respect he felt for me when he was my teacher of languages, I feel I have the strength to throw the whole thing over and forget him. "Why these grand words, these mighty resolutions?" I hear you say. Ah! that's just it, my dear; something has happened.

My charming father, who behaves to me exactly like an old *cavaliere servente* to an Italian woman, has had, as I told you, my portrait painted by Madame de Mir-

bel. I managed, however, to have a good copy made for the duke, and I sent the original to Felipe. The miniature went yesterday, together with these few words: —

"Don Felipe, your absolute devotion is accepted in blind confidence. Time will show whether this is not attributing too much nobility to a man."

The gift was great; it looks like a promise and, oh horrors! an invitation; but, what you will think worse still, I wanted it to express a promise and an invitation without going so far as to give them. If in his answer there is a single "my Louise" or even "Louise," he is lost.

Tuesday.

No! he 's not lost. This Spanish grandee of mine is an adorable lover. Here is his letter: —

"Every moment that I pass without seeing you is nevertheless filled with you. I close my eyes to all things else and fasten them in meditation on your image. For all time they will rest upon that marvellous ivory — that talisman, I should say — where your blue eyes speak, and art becomes reality. The delay of this letter is caused by my enjoyment of that contemplation in which I said to you all that I must here restrain.

"Yes, since yesterday, alone with you, I have yielded myself up, for the first time in my life, to complete, entire, infinite happiness. If you could see where I have placed you — between the Virgin and God — you would understand

the emotions in which I have passed the night. But I will not tell them to you lest I offend you; it would be torture to me to receive one glance devoid of that angelic kindness which is now my life.

"If — if, queen of my heart and life, you would deign to grant me a thousandth part of the love I feel for you! The *if* of that constant prayer plays havoc with my soul. I am torn between belief and fear, between life and death, between light and darkness.

"A criminal is not more agitated while the verdict is deliberated than I am while I write these words. The smile upon your lips, to which I look at every moment, alone can calm the fear I feel of displeasing you. Since I came into the world, no one, not even my mother, has ever smiled upon me. The beautiful young girl who was destined to be my wife repulsed my heart and loved my brother. My efforts as a statesman were defeated. I saw in the eyes of my king only hatred and a desire for vengeance. We were enemies from our youth up; he considered as a mortal insult to himself, the vote by which the Cortes raised me to power. However strong a soul may be, doubt will at least enter it. Besides, I know myself; I know the ill grace of my appearance; I feel how difficult it is to estimate a heart through such a covering. To be loved, — it had passed into a dream before I met you. When I attached myself to you I knew that devotion, the devotion that expects nothing, could alone excuse me.

"As I contemplate your portrait, as I drink in that smile so full of divine promises, a hope that I will not listen to shines upon my soul. The light of dawn is struggling with the night of doubt. I fear to offend you by suffering it to break.

"No, you cannot love me yet, I feel it. But, little by little, as you learn the power, the duration, the extent of my unspeakable affection, you will grant it a little place in your life. If my ambition offends you, tell me so without anger, and I will drive it back into my heart. But if you will try to love me do not let me know of it unless you are certain; for the happiness of my whole life lies in serving you — you only."

My dear, in reading those last words I thought I saw him as pale as he was that night when, by taking the camellias, I showed that I accepted his devotion. I read in these submissive phrases something other than the flowers of rhetoric which every lover uses, and I felt a great commotion in myself, — I breathed the breath of happiness.

The weather is shocking; it is impossible to drive out without giving rise to suspicion; even my mother, who often goes out in the rain, has had to stay at home.

Wednesday evening.

I have just seen *him* at the Opera. My dear, he is no longer the same man. He came to our box with the Spanish ambassador, who presented him. After looking in my eyes and seeing that his audacity did not displease me, he seemed not to know what to do with his arms and legs, and he called Madame d'Espard "mademoiselle." But his eyes flashed a brighter light than

that of the chandeliers. At last he went away, as if he feared to commit some folly.

"The Baron de Macumer is in love," said Madame de Maufrigneuse to my mother.

"That would be strange in a fallen minister," replied my mother.

I had the strength to look at Madame d'Espard, Madame de Maufrigneuse, and my mother with the curiosity of a person who does not understand a foreign language and is trying to guess what is being said; but inwardly I was grasped by a passionate joy, in which, it seemed to me, my soul was bathing. There is but one word to express what I feel, — rapture. Felipe loves so truly that I think him worthy to be loved. I am the principle of his life, and I hold in my hand the thread that guides his thought. And now (as you and I must tell the whole truth to each other) I feel a violent desire to have him surmount all barriers to reach me and demand of me to be his. I want this in order that I may know whether his passionate love could be calmed and humbled by a look.

Ah! my dear, I stop, trembling. I hear a step, a noise without. Yes, from my window I can see him on the wall, risking his life.

I made but one sign; he sprang from the wall, which is ten feet high, and ran down the road to a spot where I could see him, as if to show me he was not hurt.

This care for my feelings, when he must have been quite giddy from his fall, touched me so much that I am crying, though I don't know why. Poor ugly man! why was he there? What did he want to say to me?

I dare not write any more of my thoughts. I will go to bed and dream of joy, and of all that you and I would say to each other were we together. Adieu, dear silent one. I have no time now to scold you for your silence, but it is a whole month since I heard from you. What has happened in the mean time?

XX.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO LOUISE DE CHAULIEU.

May.

If love is the life of the world, why have stern philosophers suppressed it in marriage? Why does society make it a law to sacrifice the Woman to the Family, creating thus a secret struggle in the bosom of marriage, —a struggle which society foresaw as so dangerous that it has invented powers with which to arm the man against us. I see in marriage two opposing forces which legislators ought to have united. Can they be united? that is the question I ask myself as I read your letters. Ah! dearest, a single one of those letters is

enough to ruin the edifice built up with so much care by my great writer, — an edifice in which I was sheltering myself with quiet satisfaction!

The laws were made by old men, and women know it. They have sagely decreed that conjugal love exempt from passion does not degrade us, and that a woman ought to give herself without love when the law permits a man to make her his. Concerned only for the Family, they have imitated Nature, whose sole purpose is to perpetuate the species. I was a being formerly, I am now a thing! More than one tear have I shed in secret. Louise, how is it that our destinies are so unlike? With you, love will enlarge your soul, your virtue will lie in passion; your duty, if you marry Felipe, will be the sweetest, the most expansive of all sentiments. Where lies the meaning of this difference in our fates? Our future is big with the answer; I await it with feverish curiosity. You love, you are adored; oh! dearest, give yourself wholly to that beautiful poem we studied so much. The beauty of woman, so delicate, so spiritualized in you, was surely given by God that she might charm and please, — that must be His design.

Nevertheless, my dearest, keep back the secret of your tenderness; subject Felipe to those subtle tests we so often talked of, and learn if he is worthy of you. Above all, ask yourself if you love him even more than

he loves you. Louise, you are still free; do not risk the dangerous bargain of an irrevocable marriage without security, I implore you. Sometimes a gesture, a word, a look in a conversation without witnesses, when souls are off their guard and stripped of worldly hypocrisies, reveal great precipices.

You do not know with what anxiety I think of you. In spite of distance I see you, I hear you, I feel all that you are feeling. Do not fail to write to me and tell me all; omit nothing. Your letters bring passionate emotions to my simple, tranquil life, unvaried as a high-road. The most that happens here, my dearest, is a sort of game that I play with myself, passing alternately from discouragement to hope; but I will write of this later. Perhaps I have asked more happiness of life than life can give. I suppose we must when young be always trying to make the real and the ideal harmonize. My reflections, and at this moment I am making them in solitude, sitting under the shadow of a rock in my park, have brought me to think that love in marriage is an accident, on which it is impossible to base a law which could or should rule all. My philosopher of the Aveyron, Bonald, has good reason to consider the Family the only possible social unity, and to make woman subject to it, as she has been through all time. The solution of this great question, terrible for us, lies, I believe, in our first child. For this reason,

I desire to be a mother, — if only to give food to the craving activity of my soul.

Louis is always most adorably kind; his love is active, and my tenderness is abstract; he is happy; he gathers his flowers, and pays no heed to the earth that produces them. Happy egotism! No matter what it costs me, I lend myself to all his illusions, just as a mother (according to my ideas of motherhood) wearies herself to give pleasure to her child. In fact, the little familiar name by which I call him in our home is "my child." I await the fruit of all my sacrifices, which are a secret between God and you and me. Maternity is an enterprise in which I have opened an enormous credit; it owes me so much that I fear it can never pay me in full; it is charged with developing my energy, enlarging my heart, and compensating me for all things by illimitable joys. Oh! my God, grant I be not defrauded! there lies all my future, and — oh, terrifying thought! — my virtue.

XXI.

LOUISE DE CHAULIEU TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

June

My dear married darling, — Your letter came just in time to justify me to myself for a daring per-

formance on which I have been thinking night and day. I certainly have a craving for unknown, or, if you choose to say so, forbidden things, which makes me rather uneasy, for it is the sign of a war going on within me between the laws of the world and those of nature. I don't know if nature in me is stronger than society, but I often catch myself making compromises between those two powers.

Well, to speak plainly, I wanted to talk with Felipe, alone, at night, under the lindens in the garden. Most assuredly that wish makes me deserve the name of "sly puss" the duchess bestowed upon me. Nevertheless, I think it a very prudent and wise proceeding. While rewarding the many nights he has spent at the foot of my wall, I should be able to find out what Felipe thought of my proceeding, and that would give me a clue to judge him by. If he worships that wrong proceeding at a respectful distance, he shall be my husband; if he is not even more respectful and trembling than when he bows to me on horseback in the Champs-Élysées, I will never see him again.

As for the world, I risk less in seeing my lover in this way than by smiling on him in the salons of Madame de Maufrigneuse or Madame de Beauséant, where we are surrounded by spies; for God knows how they would watch a girl suspected of noticing a man like Macumer. But oh! if you only knew how

agitated I was in my own mind while I imagined this scheme, and tried to think of some way to carry it out. I did so regret you were not here; we might have talked it over for hours, lost in a labyrinth of uncertainty, and fancying all sorts of things in a first interview, alone, by night, in shade and silence, beneath the lindens silvered with such a moon! — oh, think of it! But I had to tremble and palpitate all alone, saying to myself, "Oh! Renée, where are you?" So when your letter came, it fired the powder and my last scruples were blown up. I threw my adorer a little note containing a key to the garden gate and these words: —

"It is desirable to prevent you from committing further follies. By breaking your neck you will injure the reputation of the person you say you love. Are you worthy of another proof of esteem? Do you deserve to be spoken to to-morrow night, at the hour when the moon casts the shadow of the lindens on the garden?"

Last night, just as Griffith was going to bed, I said to her: —

"Take a shawl and come with me, my dear; I am going to the end of the garden, and want no one to know it."

She did n't say a word, but followed me.

What sensations, oh, my Renée! After waiting a little while in a sort of charming agony, I saw him,

gliding along like a shadow. When I had crossed the garden without disaster I said to Griffith: —

"Don't be surprised. The Baron de Macumer is here, and that is the reason why I have brought you with me."

She did n't say a word.

"What do you wish of me?" said Felipe, in a voice that sounded as though he were beside himself.

"I wish to say to you that which I cannot write," I replied.

Griffith walked a few steps away. The night was one of those balmy nights fragrant with flowers. At that moment I felt an intoxicating pleasure in being alone with him in the soft twilight of the lindens, beyond which the garden and the house shone white in the moonlight. This contrast seemed a vague image of our love, about to pass from mystery to the dazzling publicity of marriage. After an instant given to the pleasure of the situation I said: —

"Though I am not afraid of calumny, I do not wish you to climb into that tree again," pointing to the elm, "nor on that wall. We have played school-girl and school-boy long enough; let us lift our actions to the level of our positions. If you had killed yourself when you jumped I should have been dishonored."

I looked at him; he was white as a sheet.

"And if you were detected here," I went on, "either my mother or I would be suspected."

"Forgive me!" he said, in a feeble voice.

"You may pass along the boulevard," I added; "I shall hear your step, and if I wish to see you I will open my window. But I shall not allow you to incur, or incur myself, that danger unless there is some strong reason for it. Why have you forced me, by your imprudence, to commit an imprudence myself, and risk giving you a bad opinion of me?"

I saw the tears in his eyes, and I felt they were the finest answer in the world.

"You must know," I said, smiling, "that my present act is excessively rash."

After one or two turns in silence under the trees he seemed to recover speech.

"You must think me stupid," he said; "but I am so drunk with happiness that I have neither strength nor mind. But be sure of this: you sanctify all actions, to my eyes, by the mere fact that you do them. The respect I have for you is only second to that I feel to God. Besides, Miss Griffith is here."

"She is here for others, but not for us, Felipe," I said hastily.

My dear, he understood me!

"I know," he said, giving me a most humble look, "that whether she were here or not, all would be between us as though she saw us. If we are not in presence of men, we are in presence of God, and our own self-respect is more to us than that of the world."

"Thank you, Felipe," I said, giving him my hand with a gesture you ought to have seen. "A woman, and I am a woman, is always inclined to love a man who understands her — oh! only inclined," I added; "I don't wish you to feel more hope than I am willing to give. My heart will belong only to the man who knows how to read it and comprehend it. Our sentiments, without being absolutely alike, ought to turn in the same direction and be at an equal height. I do not want to boast of myself; for certain good qualities that I think I have may be partly faults; but, such as they are, if I did not have them I should be wretched."

"After having accepted me as your servant, you permitted me to love you," he said trembling, and looking at me as he said each word; "I have more than I originally asked for."

"Well," I said quickly, "your lot is better than mine. I should not be sorry to exchange, — but that is your affair."

"It is my turn now to thank you," he said. "I know the duty of a loyal lover. I must prove to you that I am worthy of you, and you have the right to test me as long as you please. You may — yes, you shall reject me if I betray your trust."

"I know you love me," I answered. "Up to this time" (and I emphazied the words cruelly) "I like no one better; that is why you are here now."

We then walked up and down, talking together; and I must admit that my Spaniard when at his ease displayed true eloquence of heart as he expressed to me, not his passion, but his tenderness; he explained his feelings by an adorable comparison with the love of the divine. His vibrating voice, which gives a peculiar value to his ideas, in themselves so delicate, was like the notes of a nightingale. He spoke low in the middle tones of his delicious organ, and his sentences came rapidly like an effervescence; his heart overflowed in them.

"Enough," I said, "or I shall stay here longer than I ought."

With a gesture I dismissed him.

"So you have engaged yourself, Mademoiselle," said Griffith.

"Perhaps so if it were in England, but not in France," I answered, carelessly. "I wish to make a love-marriage, and not to be mistaken, that's all."

You see, my dear, love did n't come to me; I behaved like Mahomet with his mountain.

Friday.

I have seen my slave again. He has grown timid; he has a mysterious, worshipful air which I like; he seems to have a deep sense of my glory and power. But nothing in his looks or manner will give the gossips of society the slightest suspicion of the infinite love that my eyes can see in him.

And yet, my dear, I am not carried away, mastered, subjugated; on the contrary, I master, I subjugate. In short, I reason. Ah! I wish I could get back that fear I felt when the teacher fascinated me. There must be two loves: the one that commands, and the one that obeys. They are distinct, and they give birth to two passions; and one is not the other. Perhaps a woman ought to know both to square her account with life. Do these two passions unite? Can a man in whom we inspire love inspire us with love in return? Will Felipe some day be my master? Shall I tremble before him as he trembles before me? These questions make me shudder. He is very blind. If I'd been he, I should have seen that Mademoiselle de Chaulieu under those lindens was coquettishly cold, starched, and calculating. No, this is not loving; it is only playing with fire. Felipe still pleases me, but I now find myself quite calm and at my ease. No more obstacles — dreadful thought! Everything in me has flattened down; I'm afraid to question myself. He made a great mistake to hide the violence of his love; he left me mistress of myself. Yes, dear, sweet as the remembrance is of that half-hour under the trees it does not compare to the emotions I had in saying: "Shall I go, or shall I not go? Shall I write, or shall I not write?"

Is this the way it will be with all pleasures?

Would n't it be better to keep putting them off, rather than take them and enjoy them? Is hope so much better than possession? Are the rich the poor, the gainers losers? Have we, you and I, stretched feelings too much by over-developing our imagination? Sometimes that idea actually freezes me. Do you know why? I dream of going to the end of the garden without Griffith. Where should I get to then? Imagination has no limit, but satisfaction has. Dear philosopher in a corset, tell me how to reconcile these two conditions of a woman's life. One thing is certain, I cannot be satisfied with things as they are.

XXII.

LOUISE TO FELIPE.

I AM not pleased with you. If you cannot weep over Racine's Bérénice, if you do not think it the most dreadful of tragedies, you do not comprehend me, and we shall never understand each other. Let us part; forget me; for if you do not respond to my feelings in essential matters I shall forget you, — or rather, you will become nothing to me, as if you had never existed.

Yesterday, at Madame d'Espard's, you assumed an air of satisfaction which supremely displeased me. You seemed so sure of being loved. Moreover the independence of your mind alarmed me. Instead of

being absorbed in your love, you were intent on making witty speeches. That 's not the way with true believers; they are always humble before divinity. If I am not in your eyes a being superior to all other women, if you do not see in me the very source of your life, then I am less than a woman because only a woman.

You have roused in me a feeling of distrust, Felipe; it will out; for when I consider our past I think I have reason to be distrustful. Let me tell your Excellency, the constitutional minister of all the Spains, that I have deeply reflected on the unhappy condition of my sex. My Innocency has held torches in both hands without burning herself. Therefore listen to what my youthful experience has told me; I repeat it for your benefit:

In all other earthly things duplicity, unfaithfulness, and broken promises have judges who inflict punishments; but it is not so with love, which is forced to be victim, accuser, defender, judge, and executioner, all in one; for the worst treachery and the greatest crimes against love are secret; they are committed soul against soul without witnesses, and, moreover, it is the interest of the poor murdered ones to hold their tongue. Consequently, love has its own code, its own vengeance, with which the world has nothing to do. Now I am resolved never to forgive a crime; and there is no such thing as a peccadillo in things of the heart. Yesterday you chose to behave like a man who was sure of being

loved. It is true you would be wrong not to *feel* that, but you would be criminal in my eyes if it took away from you the ingenuous charm that the fluctuations of hope once gave you. I do not want to see you either timid or too self-confident; neither do I want you to fear the loss of my affection, which would be an insult to me; but I do not like the secure and airy mannner in which you are beginning to carry your love. You ought not to feel more free than I am myself. If you do not know the torture that a single thought can inflict upon the heart, tremble lest I teach it to you. With a single glance I gave my soul to you, and you read it. To you were given then the purest feelings that ever rose in the heart of a young girl. The reflections, the meditations, of which I have spoken to you came only from the head; but when the heart is wounded and asks counsel of the mind, believe me, a young girl has the prescience of an angel who knows, and can do, all.

I declare to you, Felipe, that, even if you love me as I believe you do, were you to let me suspect the least relaxation in the feelings of respect, obedience, and submission which you promised me, if I perceived any diminution in that first and beautiful love which came from your soul to mine, I should say nothing, I should not torment you with letters more or less dignified, more or less proud and angry, or merely scolding letters like this one, — no, I should say nothing, Felipe.

You would see me sad, sad unto death; but I should not die without inflicting on you the saddest of all blights; without dishonoring the memory of her whom you have loved; without planting in your heart eternal regrets, for you would see me lost here below in the eyes of men, and forever lost in the other world.

Therefore, do not make me jealous of the happy Louise, the Louise sacredly loved, the Louise whose soul expanded in a cloudless love; who possessed, in Dante's sublime language: "Senza brama, sicura ricchezza."

You put into my heart last night the cold and cruel blade of doubt. Do you understand what I mean? I distrusted you, and I have suffered so much that I long to doubt no more. If you find my service too hard, leave it; I shall not be angry.

Do I not know you are a man of intellect and wit? Reserve those flowers of your soul for me; turn a dull eye to the world, and do not put yourself in the way of receiving flattery, praises, compliments from any one. Come to me rejected and disliked, the object of calumny or contempt, tell me that women cannot comprehend you, that they ignore you, that none of them can love you; then shall you learn what there is for you in the heart and love of your Louise.

The treasures of our love must be so buried that the whole world may trample over them and not suspect them. If you had been handsome I might never have given you a thought, and sure I am I should never have

discovered in you the world of reasons that has made love blossom. Those reasons! we cannot know them, any more than we know why the sun calls forth the blossom or matures the fruit; and yet there is one that I do know, and it charms me — your noble face has its character, its language, its *countenance* for me alone!

Yes, I alone have the power of transforming you and of making you the most adorable of all men; and I will not have your mind escape my possession; it is not to be revealed to others, any more than your eyes, your charming mouth, your features, speak to them. To me alone the right to illumine the fires of your intellect. Remain to others the gloomy, cold, disdainful grandee of Spain you have always been. You were a savage land among whose ruins no one ventured; you were contemplated from afar; and behold, now you are making commonplace highways for all the world to enter; you will soon become an amiable Parisian!

Have you forgotten my programme? Yesterday your evident joy boasted openly that you loved me. It required the glance I gave you last night to prevent you from letting the keenest, wittiest, most satirical salon in Paris know that I inspired you. I think you too noble to have a policy in your love, but if you cannot continue to have with me the simplicity of a child I shall pity you; and yet, in spite of this first mistake you are still an object of the profound admiration of

LOUISE DE CHAULIEU.

XXIII.

FELIPE TO LOUISE.

When God sees our faults he sees also our repentance. You are right, my dear mistress. I felt that I had displeased you without being able to fathom the cause of your displeasure. You have now explained it and given me fresh cause to adore you. Your jealousy, like that of the God of Israel, fills me with happiness. Nothing is more sacred than jealousy. Oh, my beautiful guardian angel, jealousy is a sentinel that never sleeps; it is to love what physical pain is to man, a warning. Be jealous of your servant, Louise; the more you strike, the more he will kiss the rod which tells him in striking how much you care for him.

Yes, I did attempt last night to show you what I was before I loved you. People used to say in Madrid that my conversation gave them pleasure, and I wanted you to see for yourself that I had some value. Was that vanity? If so, it is well punished. Your last look left me in a state of trembling agitation I had never before experienced, — not even when the French forces appeared before Cadiz and my life was nearly sacrificed to the hypocrisy of the king.

I sought in vain for the cause of your displeasure; I was well-nigh in despair at this sudden and jarring want of harmony between our souls when I believed I was acting by your will, thinking with your thought, seeing with your eyes, enjoying your pleasure and feeling your pain, as I feel heat and cold. "Displease her!" I repeated like one beside himself. My noble and beautiful Louise, if anything could increase my devotion to you and my inalterable belief in your saintly spirit it would be the doctrine you have now put into my heart like a new light.

If these are your punishments what will be your rewards? Your mere acceptance of me as a servant was beyond my hopes. Since then I have derived from you an unhoped-for life; I am vowed to a worship; my breath is not useless; my strength has a purpose — were it only that of suffering for you. I have told you, and I here repeat it, that you will always find me what I was when I offered you the duty of an humble, unassuming servant. Yes, were you even lost or dishonored, my tenderness would increase, my hand would stanch your wounds, my prayers would carry to God the assurance that you were not guilty. Have I not told you that the sentiments I bear for you in my heart are those of a father, a mother, a brother, a sister, — that I am, before all things, a family for you? I am all, or nothing — as you will.

But surely you will pardon me if sometimes I am more a lover than a father or a brother; though the father and the brother is ever behind the lover. If you could look into my heart when I see you so beautiful and radiant, so calm and so admired in your carriage on the Champs-Élysées or in your box at the opera! If you only knew how little personal pride I feel when I hear the praises drawn forth by your beauty, your bearing, and how I love the unknown persons who utter them! When by chance you have cast a flower into my soul by bowing to me, I am both humble and proud; I walk away as though God had blessed me; I return home joyous, and my joy leaves in my being a long and luminous trace; it shines in the smoke of my cigar; and I know, better than ever, that the blood which is boiling in my veins is all yours.

Do you not know how you are loved? After seeing you, I return into my study, which glows with Saracenic magnificence, but where your portrait eclipses all. I touch the spring that makes it invisible to all eyes but mine; I cast myself into the infinite of contemplation; poems of happiness come into my mind; from the heaven in which I am I see the course of my coming life, such as I never dared to hope it. Have you sometimes heard in the silence of the night, or amid the noise of your gay society, a voice resounding softly in your dear, adorable little ear? Know you not the many prayers my heart addresses to you?

So long, so often have I looked at you in silent contemplation that I have ended by discovering the reason of all your features; I see their correspondence with the perfections of your soul. That harmony of your two natures, I have put into sonnets — which you do not know because my written poesy is so far below its subject that I dare not send them to you. My heart is so absolutely absorbed in yours, that I am never a moment without thinking of you, and if you ceased to inspire my life all would be suffering within me.

Can you now understand, Louise, what suffering it was for me to feel that I had given you, involuntarily, some cause for displeasure and yet be unable to divine what it was! That beautiful dual life suddenly arrested! my heart seemed turned to ice. In the utter impossibility of explaining this discord I believed you had ceased to love me; I resolved then — sadly, and at the same time, happily — to return to my condition of servitude; but your letter was brought to me, and has filled me with joy. Oh, blame me, scold me thus forever!

Forgive me, Louise; I have not changed; I give you the key of my nature with the submission of a child. I shall never make another mistake, another false step.

Louise, endeavor that the chain that binds me to you, and which you hold in your hand, be kept so taut that the slightest movement you make may henceforth tell your every wish to him who is

Your servant, FELIPE.

XXIV.

LOUISE DE CHAULIEU TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

October, 1824.

My dear friend, — You who have been married for months to a poor sick soul whose mother you are making yourself, you can have no idea of the frightful agitations and perplexities of the drama played in the depths of some hearts under the name of Love, — a drama which an instant can turn into tragedy, where death is in a look, in an answer heedlessly uttered.

You told me to test Felipe, and I have done so, reserving for the last a great but decisive trial. I wanted to know if I was loved *quand même* — the grand saying of royalists, why not of Catholics? I walked with him nearly one whole night under the lindens in the garden, and there remained not a shadow of doubt. I was to him as deeply loved, as grand, as pure, as I had ever been; he took not the slightest advantage of the favor I had granted him. Oh! he is a true Spaniard, a true Abencerrage! He climbed my wall to merely kiss my hand, which I held out to him in the darkness from my balcony; he came near breaking his neck, but that's nothing; a great many young men would have done the same, and Christians used to endure great martyrdoms to get to heaven.

Two days ago I took the future diplomat, my very honored father aside, and said to him laughing: —

"Monsieur, it is whispered about among our friends that you intend to marry your dear Armande to the nephew of a certain ambassador, under promise of vast settlements in the marriage contract. Your daughter weeps, but she is forced to yield to the inexorable power of paternal authority. Some of these gossips say your daughter hides beneath her tears a selfish and ambitious soul. We are going to the Opera to-night, to the box of the gentlemen of the Bedchamber, and Monsieur le Baron de Macumer will be there —"

"Oh! oh!" said my father, laughing.

"You are not attending to my tale," I said, with a disdainful and sarcastic glance. "Listen; if you see me unglove my right hand please to deny this impertinent rumor, and show yourself displeased by it."

"I see I may feel quite easy about your future. You have no more the head of a girl than Jeanne d'Arc had the heart of a woman. You 'll be happy; for you will love no one, and let others love you."

On that, I burst out laughing.

"What are you laughing at, my little coquette?" he said.

"Armande laughs at everything," said my mother; "even at rheumatism, for she is not afraid of the night air."

"It is fully time she were married," said my father, "and I hope it can be done before I start for Spain."

"Yes, if you wish it," I replied simply.

Two hours later, my mother and I, the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, and Madame d'Espard were sitting like four roses in the front of the box. I sat a little sideways, with one shoulder only to the audience, so that I could see all without being much seen in that roomy box, which occupies a space between two columns opposite to the stage.

Macumer came; he planted himself close by, put his opera-glass to his eyes, and gazed at me at his ease. At the first interlude a young man, whom I call the king of knaves, came in, — a youth of feminine beauty, Comte Henri de Marsay. He produced himself with a sarcasm in his eyes, a smile on his lips, and a generally joyous air on his face. He paid his respects first to my mother and to Madame d'Espard, Madame de Maufrigneuse, the Comte d'Esgrignon, and Monsieur de Canalis; then he turned to me and said: —

"I don't know if I am the first to congratulate you on an event which renders you an object of much envy."

"Ah! a marriage?" I said. "Do you need a girl just from a convent to tell you that marriages which are talked about are never made?"

Monsieur de Marsay stooped over and said something

in Macumer's ear, and I perfectly understood from his glance and the motion of his lips that he was saying: "Baron, perhaps you are in love with that little coquette, who is only making use of you; but there is now a marriage in prospect; it is best to know what is going on."

Macumer gave the gossiping meddler a glance which, in my opinion, was a poem, and made him some such answer as this: —

"I am not in love with any little coquette."

And he said it with a look which sent me into such raptures that I glanced at my father and took off my glove. Felipe evidently had not the slightest doubt of me, not one suspicion. He has fully realized all that I expect of his noble character; he has faith in me, in me only, and the world and its falsehoods cannot touch him. Not an eyelid winked; the blue blood of my Abencerrage did not even tint his olive skin.

The count left the box, and then I said to Macumer:

"Monsieur de Marsay made an epigram on me?"

"More than an epigram, an epithalamium," he replied.

"That is Greek to me," I answered laughing, and rewarding him by a look which always puts him out of countenance.

"I don't wonder!" exclaimed my father, addressing Madame de Maufrigneuse. "These gossiping rumors

are infamous. As soon as a girl goes into society there 's a rage to marry her; people invent the greatest absurdities. I shall not marry Armande against her wishes. Now I must make a turn round the *foyer* and deny the rumor, or they will say next that I let it go uncontradicted so as to put the idea into the ambassador's head. Cæsar's daughter should be no more suspected than Cæsar's wife."

The Duchesse de Maufrigneuse and Madame d'Espard looked first at my mother and then at my father in their sparkling, shrewd, and lively way which asked a thousand silent questions. Those clever creatures saw at once there was something beneath the surface. Of all secret things love is the most public; women exhale it, I do believe! In fact, the woman who hides it is a sort of anomaly. Our eyes tell more than our tongues.

Well, after enjoying the delight of finding Felipe as grandly loyal as I wished him to be, I naturally wanted something more. So I made the signal agreed upon to bring him to my window by that dangerous way I told you of. A few hours later I found him, stiff as a statue, glued to the wall, his hand clasping the railing of the balcony, watching for the lights in my room.

"My dear Felipe," I said, "you were very nice to-night; you behaved just as I should have behaved myself if any one had told me you were going to be married."

"I felt sure you would have told me yourself, and not have left me to hear it from others," he replied.

"What right had you to the information?"

"That of a faithful servant."

"Are you really one?"

"Yes," he replied, "and I shall never change."

The soft light of the moon seemed suddenly brightened by the glance he cast first at me, and then at the abyss between the wall and the balcony. He seemed to be asking if we could n't plunge there together and die. Then the lightning passed out of his eyes, repressed by the force of passion.

"An Arab has but one word," he said in a choking voice. "I am your servant; I belong to you; I will live my whole life for you."

The hand that clasped the railing seemed to tremble. I laid mine on it and said: —

"Felipe, my friend, by my own will I am your wife from henceforth. Come to-morrow morning and ask me of my father. He wants to keep my fortune; you must promise me to acknowledge in the marriage contract that you have received it, and then, I feel sure, my father will accept you. Now go; I am no longer Armande de Chaulieu, I am Louise de Macumer, and I will commit no more imprudences."

He turned pale; I was really afraid his legs might give way under him. However, he jumped those ten

feet without doing himself any harm. Then, after causing me all that horrible agitation, he kissed his hand, and disappeared.

"Yes, I am loved," I said to myself, — "loved as never woman yet was loved."

I went to sleep with absolutely infantine content; my fate is forever settled.

About two o'clock the next day my father sent for me. I found him in his study with the duchess and Macumer. The proper speeches were most graciously exchanged. I simply answered that if Monsieur Henarez had come to an agreement with my father I had no reason to oppose their wishes. Thereupon, my mother invited the baron to dinner; after which, we all four took a drive in the Bois de Boulogne. I looked satirically at Monsieur de Marsay as he rode by on horseback, for his sharp eye at once saw Macumer and my father on the front seat of the calèche.

My adorable Felipe has had some new cards printed. See: —

HENAPEZ

(OF THE DUCS DE SORIA),

BARON DE MACUMER.

Every morning he brings me himself a bouquet of delicious hot-house flowers; in the midst of which I always find a letter containing a sonnet in Spanish to my perfections, made by him during the night.

I send you, as a specimen, the first and last of these sonnets, translated by me word for word and line for line, but without the rhymes.

First Sonnet.

Wearing a silken vest, I more than once,
With sword uplifted, heart in calm repose,
Stood forth to meet the wild bull's mad advance,
And seize its horns, sharper than Dian's crescent.
Singing an Andalusian seguidilla,
I stormed a breach beneath a rain of fire;
I staked my life upon that game of chance,
As unconcerned as though it were base lucre;
I could have faced the cannon at their mouths.
But now — now I am timid as a hare,
Or child that sees a spectre in its dreams;
For when thy soft eyes rest upon my face,
An icy sweat breaks forth, my knees give way,
I tremble, I shrink back, my courage gone.

Last Sonnet.

Last night I longed to sleep to dream of thee,
But jealous slumber fled mine eyelids;
Then, looking forth upon the silent night,
Thinking of thee, mine eyes turned heavenward.
Phenomenal sight! which love alone explaineth, —
The firmament had lost its sapphire tints;
The stars, like diamonds dulled and vitrified,
Cast murky gleams and cold reflections;
The moon, her silvery mantle fallen from her,

Rolled sadly downward to the dim horizon.
Ah! thou hast robbed the heavens of all their splendor;
The whiteness of the moon is on thy brow,
The blueness of the sky is in thine eyes,
And the stars, too! — yes, thou hast robbed the heavens.

Could he prove to a girl more enchantingly that he is always thinking of her? What do you say to a love which expresses itself in a rich prodigality of flowers,— flowers of the mind and flowers of the earth? For the last ten days I 've learned to know Spanish gallantry, — the famous gallantry of the olden time.

Ah! dearest, what is happening at La Crampade, where I walk in imagination watching the progress of our agriculture. Have you nothing to tell me of our mulberry trees, of our last winter's plantations? Does all succeed as you expected and hoped? Have the wifely flowers blossomed in your heart as well as those in the borders? Does Louis continue his madrigals? How do you get on together? How does the gentle purling of your brook of conjugal tenderness compare with the dashing torrent of my love? Don't be vexed, my dear pretty philosopher in petticoats. If you are, I 'll send Felipe in person to kneel at your feet and bring me either your head or your pardon. My life here is so perfect, dear love, that I long to know about yours in Provence. Besides, I want your congratulations on the accession to our family of a Spaniard who is exactly the color of an Havana cigar.

But, seriously, Renée, I am uneasy; I am afraid you are hiding troubles from me lest you might sadden my joy — oh, naughty girl! Write me at once a good long letter, all about your life and its least little matters. All you ever write makes me thoughtful. Often when I am at the Opera watching the ballet-dancers pirouetting, I am saying to myself; "It is half past nine o'clock, perhaps she is going to bed; I wonder what she is thinking; is she happy? does the "freedom of will" still last, or has it gone the way of wills we no longer care for? A thousand kisses.

XXV.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO LOUISE DE CHAULIEU.

October.

Impertinent girl! why should I write to you? What is there to say? While you are living that life of fêtes and operas, diversified by the agonies, the quarrels, and the flowers of love (which you describe and I share as if it were a drama played before me) I am living my humdrum life, monotonous and regular as that of a convent. We are always in bed by nine o'clock, and up at dawn. Our meals are served with exasperating punctuality. Not the slightest "eventful circumstance" ever happens.

I have accustomed myself to all this without much difficulty. It may be the natural way of human existence; what would life be if not subjected to fixed rules which the astronomers say (and so does Louis) regulate the universe. Order is never wearying. Besides, I have imposed upon myself obligations as to my toilet, which take the morning hours between the time I rise and breakfast. I am determined always to look charming; it is a duty of womanhood; I like it myself, and it gives great delight to the old man and Louis.

After breakfast we usually take a walk. When the newspapers arrive I disappear, to attend to my household affairs, or to sit down and read, for I read a great deal, or to write to you. I return about an hour before dinner. After dinner we play cards, receive visits or make them. Thus I pass my days between a happy old man who has done with the desires of life, and a young one whose only happiness I am. Louis is so content, so satisfied, that his joy has ended by comforting my soul. Happiness for us is doubtless not in passionate emotions.

Sometimes, in the evenings, when I am not wanted to make up a rubber, I bury myself in my easy-chair and let my thoughts take wing to you. I enter into you; I am part of your beautiful, fruitful life, so varied, so violently agitated, and I ask myself to what your turbulent preface is leading; will it kill the book? You

may have the illusions of love, dear darling, but I — I have nothing now but the realities of household life. Yes, your loves seem like a dream to me! I find some difficulty in understanding why you seek to make them so romantic. You demand a man with more soul than senses, more grandeur and virtue than love; you expect that a girl's dream on entering life should become reality, you ask for sacrifices in order to reward them; you subject your Felipe to tests, not to learn his character, but to know if his submission, worship, and desire will be durable. But, my child, behind these fanciful decorations stands an altar at which an indissoluble, eternal tie is bound. The morrow of marriage, that terrible fact which changes the young girl into a woman, the lover into a husband, may overthrow all the fine scaffoldings of your subtlest precautions. Louise, all wedded pairs, whether they are ardent lovers, or whether they are two persons married as Louis and I were, have to seek in marriage what Rabelais has called a great *perhaps*.

I don't blame you, though it was rather giddy, for talking with Don Felipe in the garden, or for questioning him from your balcony, he being on the wall; but what troubles me, my child, is that you are trifling with life, and I am terribly afraid that life may trifle with you. I dare not offer you all the advice that my experience suggests to me for your happiness;

but let me tell you once more, from the depths of my valley, that the viaticum of marriage is in two words, — resignation, and devotion. After all, I see that in spite of your tests and your coquetries and your sage observations, you will marry exactly as I did. The higher the desires, the deeper the precipitation, that 's all.

Oh ! how I should like to see the Baron de Macumer and talk with him for a few hours, — so anxious am I for your happiness.

XXVI.

THE BARONNE DE MACUMER TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

March, 1825.

Felipe having agreed, with the generosity of a Saracen, to the wishes of my father and mother, by acknowledging the receipt of my fortune without receiving it, the duchess has become even better to me than she was before. She calls me her *sly puss* and her *clever girl ;* she thinks me very *knowing.*

" But, dear mamma," I said to her the evening before the signing of the contract, " you attribute to policy and shrewdness and cleverness the results of love, — the truest, most single-minded, disinterested,

honest love that ever was. Do believe that I am not the clever girl you do me the honor to think me."

"Nonsense, Armande," she said, drawing me to her by my neck and kissing my forehead, "you did not want to return to the convent, or to remain unmarried, and yet, like the true Chaulieu that you are, you felt the necessity of restoring your father's family." (If you only knew, Renée, how flattering that was to the duke, who was listening to us.) "I have watched you all winter, running your little nose into everything, judging men very accurately, and divining the truth about social life in France. You have had the wit to pick out the only Spaniard capable of giving you the satisfactory life of a woman who is mistress in her own home. My dear child, you have treated him as Tullia treats your brother."

"What a school my sister's convent has been, to be sure!" remarked my father.

I gave him a look which stopped the words on his lips; then I turned to the duchess and said: —

"Mamma, I love my suitor, Felipe de Soria, with all the powers of my soul. Though this love was involuntary, it was strongly resisted when it rose in my heart, and I swear that I did not yield to it until I saw in the Baron de Macumer a soul worthy of mine, — a heart whose delicacy, generosity, devotion, strength, and sensibility fulfilled the requirements of my heart —"

"But, my dear," she said, interrupting me, "he is as ugly as —"

"As anything you please," I said quickly; "but I love that ugliness."

"Armande," said my father, "if you love him, have the strength of mind to master your love; do not risk your happiness. Happiness, my dear, depends a great deal on the first days of marriage."

"Leave us now, monsieur," said the duchess; "I have some advice to give my daughter."

When we were alone she continued as follows: —

"You are to be married in three days, my dear child, and therefore I ought to give you, without any bourgeois sentimentality, the serious advice which mothers of our station give their daughters. You marry a man you love, therefore, I need not pity you. Neither do I pity myself; I have only known you for a year, and though that has been long enough to make me love you, it is not long enough to make me weep at losing your company. Your intelligence is greater even than your beauty; you have gratified my self-love as a mother; and you have behaved like a good and amiable daughter. For that reason, you will always find me an excellent mother. You smile? Alas! when mother and daughter have lived much together as women, they are apt to quarrel in after life. I desire to see you happy. Therefore listen to me. The love

you now feel is a girl's love, the natural love of all women who are born to attach themselves to men. But alas! my child, there is but one man in the world for each of us; there are not two men; and he whom we are formed to treasure is often not the one we have chosen for a husband believing that we loved him. However strange these words may seem to you, meditate upon them. If we do not love the man we have chosen, the fault is both in us and in him; sometimes also in circumstances which depend on neither. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent the man whom our family has chosen for us, or we have chosen for ourselves, from being the one beloved man of our life. The barrier which after marriage may be felt between us is often raised by a want of perseverance both on his part and our own. To make a husband a lover is quite as delicate a piece of work as to make our lover a husband, — you have just accomplished the latter feat in an admirable manner. Well, I say again, I am very desirous of seeing you happy. Remember, from this instant, that the first three months of wedded life will make you an unhappy woman unless you submit yourself in marriage with the obedience, tenderness, and intelligence you have shown in love. For, my little girl, you have carried on your innocent affairs with all the zest of clandestine love. If your new life of happy love brings disenchantment, possibly sufferings, come

and see me and let me know of them. Do not expect too much of marriage; it will in any case bring you as much pain as joy. Married happiness requires as much culture as love. If, by some mischance, you lose the lover in your husband, remember you may find him again under another form, that of the father of your children. There, my dear child, is the whole of social life. Sacrifice all to the man whose name you bear, whose honor and worldly consideration cannot receive the slightest smirch without inflicting a lasting injury on you. To sacrifice all to a husband is not only an absolute duty to women of our rank, it is also the wisest policy. The finest attribute of all the great principles of morality is to be true and profitable on whichever side they are examined. I think I have said enough on this head. One word more; I think you are inclined to jealousy; I am jealous myself; but I do not wish you to be jealous in a foolish way. Listen: Jealousy which lets itself be seen is like a player who lays his cards upon the table. To show your jealousy is to show your hand; is it not? You cannot then guess the game on the other side. In all things, we must learn to suffer in silence. I shall have a serious conversation with Macumer about you the evening before your marriage."

I took my mother's beautiful arm, and kissed her hand, leaving a tear upon it. I saw in that moral lesson,

worthy of her and of me, the deepest wisdom, a solicitude free from social bigotry, and, above all, a true esteem for my character. In these simple words she had summed up all the lessons that her life and her experience had sold to her, probably at heavy cost. She was touched, and said as she looked at me: —

"Dear little daughter! you are about to make a terrible passage; and most women, after they have made it, would fain do like the Earl of Westmoreland."

We laughed. To explain the joke, I must tell you that at dinner the previous evening a Russian princess had told an anecdote of how the Earl of Westmoreland, having suffered dreadfully from sea-sickness on his passage across the Channel, and wishing to go to Italy, turned back when he heard of the passage of the Alps. "One passage is enough for me," he said.

And so, Renée, your gloomy philosophy and my mother's warnings began to frighten me. The nearer marriage came, the more I gathered up my strength and will and emotions to face the alarming change from girlhood to womanhood. All our conversations returned to my mind; I reread your letters, and I discovered a secret sadness in them. These fears served to make me a conventionally pale and shrinking bride; so I was thought very charming and interesting the day the contract was signed. This morning, at the mayor's office (we went there quietly without ceremony), no one

was present but the witnesses. I am finishing this letter while they are dressing me for dinner.

We are to be married this evening, at midnight, in the church of Sainte-Valère, after a brilliant reception. I must own my fears make me look like a victim, and give me a false air of modesty, which has won me an admiration I don't understand. I am delighted to see that my poor Felipe is as timid and girlish as I; the company distress him; he is like a bat in a glass shop.

"Happily this day has a morrow," he whispered in my ear. Poor fellow, he would fain he married without any one looking on; he is so shy and timid.

When the Sardinian ambassador came to the signing of the contract, be took me aside and presented a pearl necklace clasped by six magnificent diamonds. It was a gift from my sister-in-law the Duchesse de Soria. This necklace was accompanied by a sapphire bracelet, inside of which were engraved the words "I love thee before I know thee." Two charming letters were with these gifts, which I would not accept until I had asked Felipe's permission.

"For," I said to him, "I should not like you to accept anything that was not from me."

He kissed my hand, much moved, and said: —

"Wear them for the sake of that motto; the love thus offered is sincere."

Saturday night.

Here, my Renée are the last words of your girl friend. After the midnight mass we leave for an estate which Felipe, with delicate thoughtfulness, has bought in Nivernais on the road to Provence. My name is already Louise de Macumer; but by whatever name all others call me, for you there is no one but Louise.

XXVII.

MADAME DE MACUMER TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

September, 1825.

I HAVE not written to you, dearest, since the day of my marriage at the mayor's office, nearly eight months ago! As for you, not a line! That is shameful, madame.

Well, we started with post-horses for the château de Chantepleurs, the estate Felipe bought in Nivernais on the banks of the Loire, whither all our servants except my maid had preceded us, and where we ourselves arrived with extraordinary rapidity the following evening.

Since then, my dearest, all these months have elapsed and I have not written to you, but I am certain that you know why. Renée, I understand you now. It is

not to her nearest friend, nor to her mother, perhaps not even to herself that a happy bride can speak of her happy marriage. We must leave that memory in our souls as an emotion that belongs to ourselves alone, and for which there is no name. Ah! how can they call *duty* the tender follies of the heart, and the irresistible impulses of love. What horrible law has converted into "wifely duty," the thousand delicacies of taste, of sentiment, of chastity in a woman? Can it be a duty to give these flowers of the soul, these roses of life, these poems of lofty sensibility to a being we do not love? Rights, duties, in such emotions! why, they bud and blossom to the sun of love, or else their seeds must mildew in the chilly atmosphere of repugnance or aversion. No, love maintains its own prerogative.

Ah, my glorious Renée, I know you now in all your greatness. I bow the knee to you; I am amazed at your clear-sightedness. Yes, the woman who does not make, as I have made, a marriage of love, must fling herself into maternity, as a soul whom earth has disappointed flings itself into religion. From all that you have written me there issues one stern truth: none but a really great man can truly love a woman. I now know why. Man obeys two principles. In him are desire and sentiment. Inferior men mistake desire for sentiment; whereas superior men cover desire with the greater power of sentiment; sentiment communicates

reserve, and inspires them with reverence for woman. Sensibility, delicacy of feeling, is in proportion to the strength of the inward being, the soul; and the man of genius is the only man who can approach us on our own ground; he conceives, divines, and comprehends a woman; he lifts her on the wings of his desire restrained by sentiment. When mind and heart and senses all combine to bear us onward, it is not to earth we fall; we rise to higher regions, — unhappily, we do not always stay there.

Such, my dear soul, is the philosophy of *my* first months of marriage. Felipe is an angel. I can think aloud to him. It is not a figure of speech to say he is another myself. His grandeur is not to be expressed. He is more closely bound to me now that I am his; he finds in happiness fresh cause for love. I am to him the nobler part of himself. I see the future; years of marriage, far from changing his delights, will increase his confidence, develop new sensibilities between us, and strengthen our union.

What blissful rapture! My soul is so made that happiness sends vivid gleams throughout me; they warm me, they illuminate my whole inward being. The sun which gilds the summits when he sets glows with equal fervor in the rosy dawn. Ah! by what fair chance has all this come to me? My mother filled my mind with fears; her forebodings — which now seem

full of jealousy though free from vulgar pettiness — are cheated by the result; for, oh! my dearest, your fears, hers, and mine have taken wings.

We stayed at Chantepleurs more than seven months, like two eloping lovers who hide their happiness from angry parents. The roses of pleasure crowned our love, and will blossom throughout our lives. By a sudden turn of mind, one morning when I was even more fully happy than ever, my thoughts went suddenly to my Renée, to her marriage of social obedience, and I divined her life, I *penetrated* it! Oh! my angel, why are we fated to speak two different languages? Your marriage, purely social, my marriage of happy love, are two worlds which can no more comprehend each other than the finite can comprehend the infinite. You are on earth; I am in heaven. You are in the human sphere, I in the divine sphere. I reign by love, you reign by reasoning and by duty. I am so high that if there came a fall I should be shivered into a million fragments. But oh! I ought to keep silence; I am ashamed to tell you, dear, the glory, riches, wealth of joy in my springtime of love.

We are now in Paris, in a charming house in the rue du Bac, arranged for us by the same architect Felipe employed to arrange Chantepleurs. I have just been listening, my soul expanding with the sacred joys of marriage, to that celestial music of Rossini I used

to hear with an uneasy soul, — tormented, though I did not know it, with the questions of love. I am thought to be handsomer than I was, and I hear myself called "madame" with absolutely childish glee.

Friday morning

Renée, my beautiful saint, happiness draws me perpetually back to you. I feel in my heart that I am better and more loving to you than I have ever been. I have so deeply studied your married life by the beginning of my own, and I see you so grand, so noble, so magnificently virtuous, that I here and now proclaim myself your inferior, your sincere admirer, as well as your friend. Knowing what my marriage has proved to be, I see now that I should die were it other than what it is. But *you live!* Ah! by what instinct, tell me that? Never again will I make the slightest jest about anything you may say to me. Jesting, my dearest, is only ignorance; we laugh at that we know nothing about. Where recruits jest, veterans look grave; so I was told by the Comte de Chaulieu, a poor cavalry captain, who has never been farther than Fontainebleau in his life.

But, my own darling, I know you have not told me all. You have hidden some wounds from me. You suffer; I feel it. I have found ideas in the little that you have told me; and I have studied them, seeking to

discover at a distance the true reasons of your conduct. "She has never reached real marriage," I thought to myself one evening. "What is happiness to me is suffering to her; and she disguises her suffering under the pompous maxims of social morality."

Ah, Renée! that which is so glorious in true marriage is this: it needs no theories, no phylacteries, no grand words; whereas to justify the cruel social laws of our slavery and vassalage, men have heaped theory upon theory and maxim upon maxim. If your self-sacrifice is noble and sublime, is my happiness, sheltered by the white and gold canopy of the Church and sealed by the law in a mayor's office, an unnatural, abnormal thing? For the honor of the laws, for you, but above all, to sanction my own happiness, I want you happy, my Renée. Oh, tell me that you have begun to feel in your heart a little love for this Louis who adores you; tell me that the solemn and symbolic torch of Hymen has not served only to make you see the darkness of your fate.

Love, my angel, is to the moral nature exactly what the sun is to the earth. I return ever to that point, the light that lights me, and which will, I fear, consume me. Dear Renée, — who used to say in your ecstasies of friendship in the convent garden, beneath the grape-vine (do you remember?), "Louise, I love thee so that if God appeared to me I would ask him to give me all

the griefs, and thee all the joys of this world. Yes, I have the passion of suffering," — well, this day, dearest, I return thy wish; I pray to God to divide my happiness with thee.

Listen: I am certain that you are ambitious under the name of Louis de l'Estorade. Well, get him appointed deputy at the coming elections; he is nearly forty years old, and as the Chamber does not assemble for six months after the elections, he will by that time be of the required age for a man in public life. You will then come to Paris; that 's all I *need say*. My father and the friends I shall now make here will appreciate you; and if your old father-in-law will entail his property, we will obtain the title of count for Louis. That 's easily done, and — we shall be together!

XXVIII.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME DE MACUMER.

October, 1825.

My happy Louise, — You dazzle me. For several minutes I have been holding before me your letter, on which a few of my tears are shining in the setting sun, sitting here alone beneath the barren rock where I have placed a bench. In the far, far distance, like a steel blade, gleams the Mediterranean. A few sweet-scented

shrubs shadow my seat; I have planted an enormous jasmine, plenty of honeysuckle, and Spanish broom. Some day the rock will be covered with clasping and climbing things. But now it is autumn, and all this verdure is beginning to look like a faded carpet. When I am there no one comes to disturb me, for they know I want to be alone. The seat is called "Louise's Bench." Does not that suffice to tell you that I am not alone there, although alone.

If I tell you all these details, so trifling to you, if I describe the coming verdure that I hope will one day clothe my bare and frowning rock, at the top of which an accident of vegetation has already placed a grand umbrageous pine like a parasol, it is that I find in these things a mental image to which I cling.

As I sat there enjoying your happy marriage, and (why should I not confess the truth to you?) envying it with all my strength, I felt the first movements of my child, which from the depths of my being reacted on the depths of my soul. This dull sensation, — a warning, a pleasure, a pain, a promise, a reality, — this happiness which is mine only in all this world, and is a secret between me and God; this mystery tells me that the rock shall be clothed with flowers, that the joyous laughter of a family shall echo here, that my womb is blessed, and shall give life abundantly. I have long felt myself born to be a mother. Therefore the first

certainty I received of bearing another life within mê has brought me blessed consolations. A mighty joy has crowned the long, long days of devotion, which in themselves were a joy to Louis. "Self-devotion!" I said to myself, "is it not more than love; is it not the highest of all ecstasy, the generative ecstacy? Art thou not, O Devotion, the cause that leads to the effect, — the mysterious, unwearying divinity hidden beneath innumerable spheres in that unknown centre through which the worlds must pass?" Devotion, alone with its secret, filled with pleasures secretly enjoyed, on which no human being can cast an eye profane, and which none can suspect; Devotion, a jealous God and a mighty, a conquering God, inexhaustible, because derived from the very essence of things, and thus ever equal to himself in spite of the strain upon his forces, — Devotion! ah, yes, there is the sign-manual of my life.

Love, Louise, is the action of Felipe upon you, but the shining of my life upon the family will produce an incessant action of that little world on me. Your beautiful gilded harvest will pass; mine, though delayed, will be more durable. It will renew itself again and again. Love is the sweetest larceny that Society ever made from Nature, but maternity, is not that Nature herself in her highest joys? My tears are dried. Love has made my Louis happy, but marriage has made me a mother and I will be happy too!

So thinking I came home to my white manor-house with its green blinds, and now I write you.

Dear, the most natural and the most surprising fact of a woman's life exists in me for the last six months. But I must tell you, in a whisper, that it has not troubled in any way either my heart or my intellect. I see them all happy about me. The future grandfather has become like a child himself; the father, on the contrary, is grave and anxious. Both are full of little cares for me; they talk to me of the happiness of being a mother. Alas! I alone feel nothing; I dare not tell you the state of absolute insensibility in which I find myself. I fib a little, so as not to sadden their joy. But I may speak honestly to you, and I must admit that so far as I have gone, maternity begins in the imagination.

Louis was as surprised as I was by my pregnancy. The child has come of itself without other call than his impatient wishes. Chance, my dear, is the god of maternity. Though such accidents are in harmony with the general desire of nature, my doctor, when I questioned him, did not deny that the children whom we so tenderly call "the children of love" are usually handsome and intelligent; and that their life is often, as it were, protected by the happiness that shone like a brilliant star on their conception. Perhaps, my own Louise, you will have in your motherhood joys that I

can never know in mine. Perhaps a woman loves the child of a man adored as you adore Felipe better than she can love the child of a husband married from duty or for the mere sake of being married.

These thoughts, kept in the depths of my heart, add to the other grave thoughts which the hope of motherhood has brought me. But, as there can be no family without a child, I long to hasten the moment when the pleasures of the Family will begin for me and be, thenceforth, my sole existence. Just now my life is all suspense and mystery. I am extremely curious to know the moment in life when motherhood begins. Surely it cannot be in the midst of those dreadful pains I begin to fear.

Adieu, my happy one! adieu, you in whom I live and fancy all those beautiful loves, those jealousies of a look, those whispers in the ear, those pleasures which wrap us, as it were, in another atmosphere, fill us with another blood, another light, another life. Ah! my treasure, I, too, know what love is. Don't weary of telling me all. Let us keep firmly to our agreement. As for me, I shall spare you nothing.

No, I will speak openly and tell you, in order to end this letter soberly, that in rereading yours an unconquerable fear has come over me. It seems to me as though your splendid love was a defiance of God. Will not the sovereign master of this world, Misfortune, be

angry at having no part in your festival? Was there ever a glorious happiness that he did not overthrow it? Ah! Louise, do not forget in the midst of your great good fortune to pray to God. Do good, be charitable and kind; exorcise adversity by humbleness. I am more pious now, since my marriage, than I was in the convent. You never speak to me of religion. In adoring Felipe you seem to reverse the proverb, and to care more for the saint than for God. But perhaps my fears come only from the excess of my love. You go together to church and do good in secret, don't you?

I am afraid you will think me very provincial in thus ending my letter; but remember, dear, that my fears are prompted by friendship, — friendship such as La Fontaine made it, uneasy and alarmed by a dream, a thought that is still all misty. You deserve to be happy, for you think of me in your happiness. And I think of you, dear, in my monotonous existence, which is a little gray, but full, full! sober, but productive!

And so, God bless you!

XXIX.

MONSIEUR DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME DE MACUMER.

January, 1826.

MADAME, — My wife is anxious that you shall not learn through the common means of a *billet de faire part*

of an event which has given us great happiness. She has just given birth to a fine boy, whose christening we shall delay until your return to Chantepleurs. Renée and I hope you will then push on to La Crampade and be the godmother of our first-born. In this hope I have just inscribed the boy on the civil register as Armand-Louis de l'Estorade. Our dear Renée suffered much, with angelic patience. You know her, — she was supported, under this first trial of her vocation as mother, by a sense of the happiness she was giving to us.

Without committing myself to the rather ridiculous exaggerations of fathers who are fathers for the first time, I believe I may assure you that our little Armand is very handsome; you will easily believe it when I tell you that he has Renée's features and Renée's eyes. That shows that he is clever already.

Now that the doctor and the *accoucheur* assure us that Renée is out of all danger, that the child sucks well and the milk is abundant, — for nature is so rich and sound in her! — my father and I are free to give way to our great joy. Madame, that joy is so great, so full, it has so changed the whole existence of my wife and brought such brightness to the household, that I cannot but wish the same happiness for you. Renée has prepared an apartment for you, which we should like to make more worthy of our guests, but where you will, at

any rate, be received with fraternal cordiality, if not with splendor.

Renée has told me, madame, of your kind intentions toward us, and I take this occasion, as being particularly felicitious, to thank you for them. The birth of my son has determined my father to make sacrifices to which old men cannot always bring themselves. He has lately bought two estates. La Crampade brings in about thirty thousand francs a year. My father will petition the king to allow him to entail it; and if you will obtain for him, and not for me, the title you mention in your last letter you will be serving the interests of your godson.

As for me, I shall take your advice and enter the Chamber, partly for the purpose of bringing you and Renée together during the sessions. But nothing will give me more courage than to feel that you will be the protectress of my little Armand. Let us know that you will come, you so gracious and beautiful, so noble and brilliant, and play your part of fairy godmother to our eldest son. You will thus enable me to add eternal gratitude to the feelings of respectful affection with which I have the honor to be

Your very humble and very obedient servant,

LOUIS DE L'ESTORADE.

XXX.

MADAME DE MACUMER TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

January, 1826.

Macumer waked me just now to give me your husband's letter, my angel. I begin by saying *yes*. We shall go to Chantepleurs in April. It will be to me pleasure upon pleasure to go on to La Crampade, to see you, and to be godmother to your first child. But Macumer must be the godfather. A Catholic alliance with another sponsor would be odious to me. Ah! if you could have seen the expression of his face when I told him that, you would understand how that angel loves me.

"I am all the more anxious that you should go with me to La Crampade, Felipe," I said, "because we might, possibly, have a child there. I, too, I want to be a mother, — though, to be sure, I should be terribly torn between a child and you. In the first place if I saw you liking any living creature, even my son, better than me I don't know what would happen; Medea may have been right, after all; there 's a world of good sense in the ancients!"

He began to laugh. So, my treasure, you have the fruit without the flowers, and I have the flowers without the fruit. The contrast of our fates continues. We

are philosophers enough to seek, and to find, some day, the meaning and the moral of it. Bah! I have only been married ten months; there 's not much time lost; I can't make fate out of that!

We are leading the dissipated and yet full and abounding life of happy people. The days seem only too short. Society, which now sees me in the guise of wife and woman, thinks the Baronne de Macumer much handsomer than Louise de Chaulieu; happy love has its paints and patches. When, on a bright, sunshiny day, with the hoar frost hanging to the trees of the Champs-Élysées in white and starry garlands, we drive, Felipe and I, in our coupé before all Paris, united there where, only a year ago, we were so far asunder, many thoughts flock into my mind, and I fear to become too insolent in my happiness, — as you warned me I should, Renée, in your last letter.

If I am to know nothing of the joys of motherhood, you will tell them to me; and I shall be a mother through you; but in my opinion there can be nothing comparable to the delights of love. You will think me eccentric, fantastic, but a dozen times in the last ten months I have wished to die before I was thirty, in all the splendor of life, among the roses of love, in the bosom of joys; to go away satisfied, without disappointment, having lived in the sunshine, breathed the free ether, lost nothing of my crown, — not a leaflet,

— and kept my illusions, dying partly for love's sake. For think what it would be to live on with a young heart in an old body; to meet cold looks and unresponsive faces in a world where all men, even the most indifferent, smiled upon me; to be in short, a middle-aged woman! Why, it is hell forestalled!

We have had, Felipe and I, our first quarrel on this very subject. I said I wished him to have strength of mind enough to kill me as I slept, without my knowing it, so that I might go from one dream to another. The monster would not hear of it. I threatened to leave him alone in life, and the poor fellow turned pale. The great constitutional minister, my dear, is a baby in my hands. It is incredible what youth and simplicity he hides under his Spanish gravity. Now that I think aloud with him as I do with you, and have put him on this footing of absolute confidence, we are constantly amazing one another.

My dear, the two lovers, Felipe and Louise, wish to send a present to the new mother. It must be something that pleases her. Now tell me frankly what you would like, for we hate the vulgar fashion of "surprises." We want to remind you of ourselves by some pleasant souvenir, — something that you will use every day, and something, too, that will not get worn out by use. Our gayest, happiest meal, for then we are always alone together, is breakfast. I have a fancy

therefore to send you a breakfast service, the designs on which shall all be *children.* If you approve, answer immediately; for if I am to bring it to you, it must be ordered at once; the artists of Paris are like the sluggard kings. This is to be my offering to Lucina.

Adieu, dear wet-nurse; I wish you all the motherly joys, and I await with impatience the first letter in which you will tell me everything. That mention of an *accoucheur* in your husband's letter made me shudder. Poor Renée! a child costs dear, does n't it? I will tell my godchild some day how much he ought to love you.

A thousand kisses, my angel.

XXXI.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME DE MACUMER.

It is nearly five months since my confinement, and in all that time, my dear soul, I have not had one little moment in which to write to you. When you are a mother you will excuse me more than you do now, — for I see you mean to punish me by writing seldom. Do write to me, darling. Tell me your pleasures, paint me your joys with those grand tints of yours; splash in the ultramarine and don't be afraid to pain

me, for I am happy now, — happier than you can ever imagine.

I went to be churched in great state; which is always the way in the old families of Provence. The two grandfathers, Louis's father and mine, each gave me an arm. Ah! never did I kneel before God in such a transport of gratitude. I have so many things to say to you, so many feelings to describe to you, that I don't know where to begin; but, from the innermost centre of it all rises one radiant thought, — that of my prayer in church!

When, in that sacred place, where so often I had doubted life and the future, I found myself transformed into a joyful mother, I thought I saw the Virgin of the altar, bending her head and calling me to look at the Divine Infant, who seemed to smile upon me. With what holy effusion of celestial love I presented our little Armand for the Church's benediction; the rector privately baptized him while awaiting the grand ceremony. But you will see us together, Armand and me!

My child — why, here am I calling you my child! but that 's because it is the sweetest word that comes to the heart and mind and lips of a mother. So, dear child, to give you all the history of my new life, I dragged myself languidly about the gardens the last two months, wearied, worn out with the oppression of a burden I did not think could be so dear and sweet,

in spite of its discomforts. I felt such terrible apprehensions, I had such deadly forebodings that hope was not my strongest feeling. I used to reason with myself and try to think that nothing Nature wills ought to be feared; I vowed to myself that I *would* live to be a mother. Alas! for all this, I felt nothing in my heart of motherhood, even though I thought incessantly of the child that stirred within me; and even that — I mean those movements of an unknown life, which may be pleasant when we have already had children — causes more surprise than pleasure the first time. I speak to you frankly of myself, who am neither false nor affected, and whose fruition is more the gift of God, than of love. But a truce to those past sadnesses, which will never come back, I believe.

When the crisis came I had gathered within me the elements of such resistance that I bore the horrible torture marvellously, so they tell me. There was, dearest, nearly one hour during which I fell into a sort of insensibility, the effects of which were those of a dream. I felt I was two beings: one, a torn and tortured envelope; the other, a placid soul. In that fantastic state, suffering bloomed like a garland above my head; it seemed as though a rose issued from my skull and grew, and grew, and wrapped me round. The rosy color of that flower crimsoned the air. I saw red. When I thus reached the moment at which soul and

body seem to separate, a pain, which made me think of instant death, laid hold of me. I uttered dreadful cries; then I found fresh strength to suffer more. The frightful clamor of my cries was suddenly drowned in me by the delicious song of the silvery wailings of my little being. No, nothing can describe to you that moment! It seemed to me that the world was crying with my cry, that all was pain and clamor, and then that all was hushed by that weak wail of an infant.

They put me back into my great bed, which seemed to me like paradise, though I was much exhausted. Three or four joyous faces, bathed in tears, showed me the child. My dear, I was horrified!

"That little monkey!" I cried, "are you sure it is a child?"

Then I turned over on my side, wretched at not feeling more of a mother than that.

"Don't worry yourself, my dear," said my mother, who was taking care of me, "you have given birth to one of the finest children in the world. Be careful not to fret your imagination; give all your mind to becoming an animal; be the cow that feeds to get her milk."

So I went to sleep with the firm intention of letting myself go at the will of Nature.

Ah! my angel, the awakening after pain, after those misty sensations, those days when all seemed dark, laborious, doubtful, was divine! The shadows were

alive with a sensation far, far, beyond the delight of hearing my child's first cry. My heart, my soul, my being, a self unknown awoke in its shell, so gray and painful hitherto, — awoke like a flower breaking from its calyx at the call of the sun. The little monster took my breast and sucked; there, there was the *fiat lux!* Suddenly, I was a mother. Here is happiness, here is joy, joy ineffable — though it may not be without some pains.

Oh! my Louise, how you, too, will appreciate, when it comes to you, a pleasure that is all our own, between our child and God. The little being knows absolutely nothing but our breast. There is for him but that one shining spot in all the world; he loves it with all his strength, he thinks of nothing but this fountain of his life; he leaves it to sleep, he wakes to return to it. His lips are love inexpressible, and when they fasten there they cause both pain and pleasure, — pleasure which stretches into pain, pain which ends in pleasure. I cannot explain to you a sensation which radiates from my bosom to the sources of life; it seemed that a thousand rays start from that centre to rejoice both heart and soul. To bear a child is nothing; to suckle it, nourish it, is bearing it for all time.

Oh! Louise, there are no caresses of any lover that can equal that of the little rosy fingers which move so softly trying to clutch at life. Ah! those looks that

a babe casts first at our breast and then in our eyes! What dreams we have as we see him hanging by the lips to his treasure! And he fastens not less to the forces of the mind than to those of the body; he employs both blood and intellect; he satisfies beyond desire. The adorable sensation of his first cry, which was to me what the first ray of light must have been to the earth, came over me again when I felt my milk filling his mouth, when his eye first looked at me, when I saw in his first smile his first thought. He has laughed, dear! Well, that smile, that look, that bite, that cry, those four enjoyments are infinite; they go to the depths of the heart, and stir chords there that they alone can touch. The worlds must be fastened upon God as a child is fastened to every fibre of its mother; God is the great mother's heart. There is nothing visible, nothing perceptible in conception, nor even in pregnancy; but to nurse, my Louise, that is a joy for every moment. We see what becomes of our milk; it makes flesh, it blossoms at the tips of those darling fingers, which are like flowers in their delicacy; it makes those transparent nails, it goes to the silky hair, it moves in those little feet. A baby's feet! why, they are a language! that 's how he first expresses himself. To feed, to suckle! Louise, it is a transformation I follow hour by hour with wondering eye. The cries — you do not hear them by the ear, but by the heart

— the smiles of eyes and lips, the kicking of the little feet, ah! you understand them as though God were writing words to you in letters of fire on the firmament. There is nothing else in all the world that interests you; the father? bah! one would kill him if he woke the babe! We alone are all the world for the child, as the child is all the world for us. We are so sure our life is shared; we are so quickly compensated for the pains we have borne, the sufferings we endure! — for there *are* sufferings; may you never have, as I have, a broken breast, a wound those little rosy lips tear open daily. It would be torture, without the joy of watching the baby mouth besmeared with milk; and it is a sad rebuke to beauty, for it only happens, they tell me, to delicate skins.

In five months my young monkey has grown the prettiest creature that ever mother bathed with joyful tears, and washed and brushed and combed and decked with baby finery, — for God knows with what indefatigable ardor we dress and brush and comb and wash and change and kiss these little flowers! But my monkey is now no longer a monkey, he 's a "baby," as my English nurse calls him; a pink and white *baby;* and, as he feels he is loved, he does n't cry *too* much. But, to tell the truth, I am seldom away from him, so he has n't much chance to cry; I try to enter into his little soul.

Dear, something has come into my heart for Louis, — a feeling which is not love, but which in a loving woman would be the crown of love. I almost think this tenderness, this gratitude goes beyond love. From all that you have told me, darling, there seems to me too much of earth in love; but here I find — how shall I say it? — something religious, something divine in the affection a happy mother gives to him from whom proceed these long, these eternal joys. The joy of a mother is a light which lightens the future, but reflects upon the past the charm of memory.

Old Monsieur de l'Estorade and Louis have redoubled all their kindness to me; I am like a new person to them; their words, their looks go to my soul. The old grandfather is like a child himself; he looks at me admiringly. The first time I went down to breakfast and he saw me eating, and then giving suck to his grandson, he wept. The tears in his dry old eyes, where money usually shines, did me inexpressible good; it seemed to me that the good man felt my joys.

As for Louis, the very trees and the stones in the high-road would know he had a son. He spends whole hours gazing at that sleeping baby. He says he does n't know when he shall get accustomed to it. These excessive demonstrations of joy have revealed to me the extent of their fears and apprehensions.

My poor Louis has changed suddenly for the better.

He reads and studies much more than he did. The child has doubled the ambition of the father. As for me, my dear soul, I grow happier and happier every hour; for every hour, every moment brings a new tie between a mother and her child. What I feel within me proves to me that this feeling is imperishable, natural, equable at all moments; whereas, I do suspect love of being intermittent. No one can love the same at all moments; the fabric of life cannot always be embroidered in vivid colors; love must and ought to cease. But motherhood has no decline to fear; it increases with every need of the child; it develops as he develops. Is n't it at once a passion, a need, a sentiment, a duty, a necessity, — happiness, in short?

Yes, my darling, this is the special life of womanhood. Our craving for self-devotion is satisfied; we can find no cause for jealousies here. Perhaps it is for us the only point at which Nature and Society are in harmony. Here Society has enriched Nature; that is, it has added to the instinct of motherhood the spirit of Family, the continuation of name, blood, and fortune. With what love a woman ought to surround the dear being who has first made known to her these wondrous joys, who has first brought forth the powers of her soul, and taught her the great art of motherhood! The law of primogeniture, which has come through all ages from the origin of the world, and is part of Society itself, cannot, it seems to me, be put in question.

Ah, how many things an infant teaches its mother! There are so many pledges made between ourselves and virtue in the ceaseless protection we give to its feeble being, that a woman is not in her true sphere until she is a mother. Then only do her powers unfold; then she puts in practice the duties of her life; then she has all its joys and all its pleasures. A woman who is not a mother is, must be, an incomplete being; she has missed her destiny. Make haste to be a mother, my darling; multiply your present happiness with my ecstasy.

I left my letter abruptly, hearing your godson cry; I heard him from the farther end of the garden. I can't let this letter go without adding a few words; I have just reread it, and I am a little shocked at the commonness of some of the sentiments contained in it. What I feel, Louise, I think all mothers must feel as I do, must express as I do; but perhaps you will laugh at me, as we laugh at those fathers who talk about the beauty and intellect of their progeny, and think none other is like it. But after all, my treasure, the grand meaning of this letter is this — and I repeat it: I am as happy now as I was unhappy before. This manor is to me the promised land. I have crossed my desert. A thousand kisses, dearest! Write to me. I can now read of your happiness and your love without shedding tears. Adieu.

XXXII.

MADAME DE MACUMER TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

March, 1826.

Can it be three months, dear Renée, since I wrote to you, and since you have written to me? I am the guiltiest of the two, for I did not answer your last letter. But you are not touchy, — that is, you never used to be.

Your silence about the breakfast service made Macumer and me conclude that you agreed to our plan; and the charming little works of art leave Paris this morning for Marseille. The artists have been all these months about them; and when Felipe proposed to me to go and see the service before it was packed, I suddenly came to a sense that we had not written to each other since that letter which made me feel I was a mother with you.

My dear, this terrible Paris! that's my excuse; and now I should like to hear yours. Oh, the world, society, what a gulf! Have I not already said to you that to live in Paris one must be Parisian. The world here destroys all sentiments, steals your time, and would destroy your heart if you allowed it. What an amazing masterpiece is that creation of Célimène in Molière's "Misanthrope!" She is the woman of the world of

Louis XIV.'s time, and ours too, — the woman of the world of all epochs. Where should I be without my ægis, without my Felipe's love? I told him this morning, thinking of these things, that he was my saviour. Though my evenings are given up to fêtes, balls, concerts, theatres, I find at home the joys of love and its sweet follies, which expand my heart and efface the stains of the world.

I never dine at home except on the days when we invite persons whom we call friends. I have taken a day, Wednesday, when I receive; otherwise I am seldom in the house. I have entered into social competition with Mesdames d'Espard and de Maufrigneuse, also with the old Duchesse de Lenoncourt. My house is considered very amusing. I have allowed myself to be made the fashion, seeing how delighted Felipe is with my success. I give him all my mornings; but from four in the afternoon till two o'clock at night I belong to Paris. Macumer makes an admirable master of the house; he is so witty and so grave, so truly a grandee, and yet so gracious and graceful; he would make a woman love him, even if she had married him for "convenience."

My father and mother have started for Madrid. Louis XVIII. being dead, the duchess had no difficulty in getting our good King Charles X. to appoint her poet as second secretary to the embassy. My brother, the Duc de Rhétoré, deigns to look upon me as a

personage. As for the Comte de Chaulieu, that fancy soldier owes me a debt of eternal gratitude. My fortune was used, before my father's departure, in buying and entailing on him an estate worth forty thousand francs a year, and in bringing about his marriage with Mademoiselle de Mortsauf, an heiress in Touraine. The king, who does not wish the name and titles of the houses of Lenoncourt and Givry to die out, is about to authorize my brother by letters-patent to take the name, title, and arms of Lenoncourt-Givry. How could a king of France allow those noble blazons and that heroic device, *Faciem semper monstramus,* to perish? Mademoiselle de Mortsauf, the granddaughter and only heiress of the Duc de Lenoncourt-Givry, will have, they say, an income of over a hundred thousand francs. My father stipulated that the arms of the Chaulieus should be quartered on those of the Lenoncourts. My brother will therefore be Duc de Lenoncourt-Chaulieu. The brother of Mademoiselle de Mortsauf, to whom this great fortune would go by right, is in the last stages of consumption; his death is expected at any moment. The marriage will take place next winter, after the mourning is over. I am told I shall have a charming sister-in-law in Madeleine de Mortsauf.

So you see, Renée, how wise my father was in the arguments he used to me. This result has won me the admiration of a great many persons, and it explains my

marriage. Because of his old affection for my grandmother, the Prince de Talleyrand extols Macumer, so that our success in the world is now complete. I reign in this Paris, where two years ago I was of no account. Macumer sees his happiness envied by every one, for I am held to be "the most brilliant woman in Paris;" you must know that there is a score of "the most brilliant women in Paris." All the men warble notes of love to me, or look their envy with their eyes. Really and truly there is in this concert of desires and admirations such intense satisfaction to one's vanity that I now understand the excessive extravagance women commit to enjoy these frivolous and passing pleasures. Such triumphs intoxicate one's pride, vanity, self-love, — in short, all the sentiments that make our *self*. This perpetual worship inebriates so violently that I am no longer surprised to see how egotistical, frivolous, and forgetful women are in this whirl of dissipation. Society goes to the head. We lavish the flowers of our hearts and minds, our most precious time, our most generous efforts, on persons who pay us with smiles and jealousy; who exchange the false coin of their phrases, compliments, and adulation against the pure gold of our courage, our sacrifices, our efforts to be beautiful, well-dressed, witty, affable, and charming to all. We all know how costly this business is; we know that we are robbed in it, and yet we give our-

selves up to it all the same. Ah! my dearest, how one thirsts for a true heart; how precious to me are Felipe's love and devotion; and how I love you! With what joy do I make my preparations to go and rest at Chantepleurs, away from the comedies of the rue du Bac and the salons of Paris. I have just reread your last letter, and I can no better describe to you this infernal paradise of Paris than by saying that it is impossible for a woman of the world to be a mother.

I shall see you soon, dearest. We stay a week at Chantepleurs, and shall be with you about the 10th of May. Renée! we shall meet again after more than two years! What changes! We are both women, wives, — I the happiest of mistresses, you the happiest of mothers. If I have not written to you, darling, it is not from forgetfulness. And my godson, the little monkey, is he still as pretty? Does he do me credit? He is nearly nine months old now. I should like to be present when he takes his first steps in the world; but Macumer says that precocious children seldom walk at ten months old. What famous talks we shall have, like the good old times at Blois! I shall see, too, whether child-bearing spoils the figure, as they say it does.

If you answer, all-glorious mother, direct to Chantepleurs.

XXXIII.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME DE MACUMER.

Ah! my child, if you ever become a mother you will know if it is possible to write letters during the first two months we nurse a baby. Mary, my English nurse, and I are tired out all the time. I think I did not tell you that I set my heart on making everything myself. Before the great event I had sewn with my own fingers all the baby-clothes, and embroidered all the caps. I'm a slave, my darling, a slave day and night. In the first place, Armand-Louis sucks when he wants to, and he is always wanting. Then he has to be washed and dressed and changed so often; and a mother loves to look at him asleep, and sing him songs, and carry him about in her arms if the weather is fine; so that really she has no time to herself. If you have society to take up yours, I have my baby, our baby! What a rich, full life! Oh, my dearest, you will soon be here, and you shall see for yourself!

But I am so afraid his teething will begin and he'll be cross when you are here, and a cry-baby. He does n't cry much now, but then, to be sure, I am always with him. Children only cry because they have wants nobody guesses, but I am on the look-out for all of his. Oh,

Louise, my heart enlarges, while you say yours is getting belittled in the service of the world.

I am expecting you with all the impatience of a hermit. I want to know what you think of l'Estorade, just as, I make no doubt, you want to know what I think of Macumer. Write me from your last night's stopping-place. My men wish to go and meet our illustrious guests. I welcome you, queen of Paris, to our poor manor-house, where you will be loved indeed.

XXXIV.

MADAME DE MACUMER TO THE VICOMTESSE DE L'ESTORADE.

April, 1826.

The new address on my letter will announce to you, dearest, the success of my solicitations. Your father-in-law is now Comte de l'Estorade. I did not wish to leave Paris without obtaining what you desired; and I write you this line in presence of the Keeper of the Seals, who has just come to say that the ordinance is signed. We shall meet soon.

XXXV.

MADAME DE MACUMER TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

Marseille, July.

My abrupt departure from La Crampade must have astonished you, and I am ashamed of it; but as I am truthful in all things and love you as deeply as ever, I shall tell you the whole trouble candidly in four words, — I am horribly jealous. Felipe looked at you too much; you and he had little conversations beneath your rock which tortured me; they changed my nature and made me bad. Your really Spanish beauty must have reminded him of his own country and that Marie Heredia, of whom I am jealous — for I am jealous of the past. Your magnificent black hair and your brown eyes, that forehead where the joys of maternity seem to put into relief past suffering like the shadows thrown by a radiant light; that purity of the Southern skin, whiter than my blond fairness, that grandeur of form, that breast, shining among its laces like a delicious fruit when you give it to my beautiful godson, — all that wounded both my eyes and my heart. There was no use in putting blue-bells among my curls, or brightening their faded fairness with cherry ribbons. I paled before a Renée I never dreamed of finding in that oasis at La Crampade.

Felipe envied that child, too much, — so much that I began to hate it. Yes, that insolent baby life which fills your home, and brightens it, and laughs and cries there, I wanted it for my own. I saw regret in Macumer's eyes. I wept for two whole nights, unknown to him. I was tortured in your house. You are too beautiful as a woman, too happy as a mother; I cannot stay near you. Ah! hypocrite, you wrote me melancholy letters, pitying yourself! In the first place, your l'Estorade is charming; he talks agreeably; his hair with its few white threads is very pretty; his eyes are fine, and his Southern manners have a nameless charm which pleases. From what I have seen I think there can be no doubt of his election as deputy from the Mouths-of-the-Rhone; he will certainly make his mark in the Chamber, and we will help him, for I shall be always at your service in whatever concerns your ambitions. The miseries of his exile have given him that calm, composed air which seems to me to be at least one half of statesmanship. In my opinion, dear, the essential thing in politics is to look grave. I tell Macumer his looks ought to make him a great statesman.

Well, now that I have seen with my own eyes that you are happy, I wing my way back, contentedly, to my dear Chantepleurs; where Felipe must arrange to be a father, for I will never see you again until I have a child at my breast as beautiful as yours. I deserve

all the names you choose to give me; I 'm absurd, infamous, without common-sense. Yes, a woman is all that when she is jealous. I 'm not angry with you, but I *suffered*, and you must forgive me for getting away from that suffering. Two days more and I should have committed some dreadful folly. Yes, I should have made an exhibition of bad taste.

But in spite of these torments which gnawed my heart, I am glad I went, glad I have seen you so beautiful, so fruitful; still my friend in the midst of your maternal joys, as I am ever yours in the midst of my precious loves. Here, at Marseille, a few miles away from you, I am already proud of you, proud of that noble mother of a family you are fated to become. With what strong sense you divined your vocation! you seem to me to have been born for a mother rather than for love, just as I was born for love rather than for motherhood. Some women can be neither; they are too ugly or too dull. A good mother, and a wife who is her husband's mistress, should have at all times sense, judgment, intelligence, and yet know how to employ the exquisite charms of womanhood. Oh! I observed you well; is n't that as good as telling you, my kitten, that I admired you? Yes, your children will be happy; they will be well brought up, bathed in the fountains of your tenderness, taught by the lights of your own soul.

Tell the truth about my departure to Louis, but give it some colorable pretext in the eyes of your father-in-law. Felipe does not know why I came away, and will never know. If he asks, I shall invent some reason. Perhaps I will tell him that you were jealous of me. Grant me that little fib.

Adieu; I write in haste that you may get this letter at your breakfast-hour; the postilion is charged to give it into your own hand. Come to Chantepleurs in October; I shall be all alone during the time that Macumer is in Sardinia, where he wishes to make great improvements to his estates. At any rate, that 's the project he has in mind at the present moment; it is a fancy of his to be always making projects; it makes him feel independent; but I notice that he is quite uneasy in telling them to me. Adieu.

XXXVI.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME DE MACUMER.

My dear, our astonishment was inexpressible when we learned at breakfast-time that you were gone; and when the postilion who took you to Marseille brought me your crazy letter my amazement was beyond words. Why, your husband and I were talking of you and

your happiness on "Louise's bench" under the rock; and you are very wrong to be displeased by it. *Ingrata!* I condemn you to return here at my first call. In that odious letter, scribbled on inn paper! you did not even tell me where you were going next; so I direct my answer to Chantepleurs.

Listen to me, dear sister of my choice, and remember first and before all, that I want you happy. Your husband, my Louise, has a depth of soul and thought which are as imposing as the gravity of his manner and his noble countenance. In his very ugliness, which is so distinguished, in that velvet glance lies a power that is really majestic; it was therefore some time before I could establish an intimacy with him, without which it is difficult to observe a nature to its depths. The man has been a diplomat, remember, and he adores you as he adores God; therefore he would of course dissimulate about his deepest feelings. And yet, after a while, I ended by discovering, without his knowledge and in spite of his diplomacy, certain things which you, my darling, have no idea of.

You and I represent two things. I am slightly the embodiment of Reason, you are Imagination. I am grave Duty, you are gay Love. This contrast, which originally existed in our natures, fate has been pleased to continue in the circumstances of our lives. I am a humble country viscountess, ardently ambitious, desir-

ous of leading her family to honor and prosperity; whereas the world already bows down to the Baron de Macumer ex-Duc de Soria, and to you, duchess by right, who reign a queen in Paris, where it is so difficult even for kings to reign. You already enjoy a fine fortune, which Macumer will double if he carries out his projects in Sardinia on his vast domains; the resources of which are well-known, by the bye, at Marseille. Admit, therefore, that the one of us two who ought to be jealous is I.

However, let us thank God that our hearts are both placed too high to suffer our friendship to descend to such vulgar pettiness. I know you; you are ashamed at having left me. Now, in spite of your flight, I will not spare you one word of certain things I meant to say to you to-day on your bench beneath my rock. Read me, I implore you, with attention, for the matter concerns you and your happiness more than it does Macumer, — though he counts for much in my moral.

In the first place, my darling, you do not love him. Before two years have passed you will weary of his adoration. You will never see in Felipe a husband, only a lover whom you can play with heedlessly, as all women do with their lovers. No, he does not compel your respect; you do not feel that profound esteem, that tenderness mingled with awe, which a woman who loves has for the man in whom she sees a god. Oh!

I have studied love, my angel; I have thrown, more than once, a plummet into the gulf of my heart. After examining you through and through I say again: You do not love.

Yes, dear queen of Paris, like other queens you would like to be treated as a commoner woman; you would like to be ruled, mastered by some strong man who, instead of adoring, would bruise your arm in a moment of jealousy. Macumer adores you too much to blame you or oppose you. A single look of yours, a single coaxing word controls his will. Sooner or later, you will despise him for loving you too much. Alas! he spoils you, just as I spoilt you at the convent; for you are one of the most fascinating of women, and you possess one of the most enchanting minds that soul can imagine. Above all, you are *true*, — and often the world requires, for our own happiness, a species of falsehood to which you will never condescend.

For instance: the world demands that a woman shall never allow the power she exercises over her husband to be seen. Socially speaking, a husband should no more seem the lover of his wife, when he is really so, than the wife should play the part of mistress to her husband. You both break this social law. My child, the thing the world pardons least (if I am to judge by what you have told me of it) is happiness; and therefore, it is best to hide it. But this is a small matter.

There is between two lovers an equality which should never, as I think, appear between a wife and her husband, under pain of a social overturn which would lead to irreparable evils. A man without power is a fearful thing, but there is something worse, — a man made powerless. Within a given time you will reduce Macumer to be but the shadow of a man; he will no longer have a will; he will no longer be himself, but a thing trained to your use; you will have so assimilated him, as it were, that instead of being two persons in the household there will be but one, and that one, consequently, incomplete. You will suffer from it, but the evil will be without remedy before you deign to open your eyes.

We may say and do what we like, but our sex will never be endowed with the qualities which distinguish a man; and these qualities are all the more necessary because they are indispensable to the Family. At this moment, in spite of his devotion, Macumer has a glimpse of these truths; he feels himself diminished by his love. His journey to Sardinia shows me that he seeks by a momentary separation to recover possession of himself. You have not hesitated to use all the power conferred on you by love. Your authority shows itself in your gesture, in your glance, in your tones. Oh! dearest, you are, as your mother told you, a courtesan, working on a man's love. You have seen, I make no doubt, that I am superior to Louis, but I

would never contradict him; I respect him before the public as the power in the family. Hypocrisy, you say. In the first place, the counsels I think it right to give him, my opinions, my ideas, I reserve for his own ear when we are alone together; but even then, my dear love, I do assure you I never show any sense of superiority to him. If I did not continue privately, as well as publicly, to treat him with the respect of a wife, he would no longer have faith in himself.

My dearest, the perfection of loving-kindness is to efface ourselves so thoroughly that those we benefit shall not think themselves inferior to the one who benefits them; and this form of hidden devotion is full of untold pleasure. Why! it has been my glory to mislead you, yourself, and to hear your praises of Louis. Prosperity, happiness, and hope, have made him regain in two years all that misfortune, misery, abandonment, and doubt had made him lose.

And so I say that, according to my observation, you love Felipe for your sake, and not for his sake. There is great truth in what your father said to you; the egotism of a great lady is lurking beneath the spring-tide flowers of your love. Ah! my child, I must love you well to be willing to write to you such cruel truths!

Let me tell you (on condition that you will not repeat one word of this to the baron) the end of one of my

talks with him. We had been singing your praises in every key, — for he sees plainly enough that I love you with a sister's love, — and I led him, little by little, into confidences.

"Louise," I said to him, "has not yet known the trials of life; fate has treated her like a petted child, and perhaps she will end by being unhappy if you do not make yourself a father to her as well as a lover."

"But can I?" he said.

He stopped short, like a man who sees a precipice before him. That exclamation sufficed to show me his state of mind. If you had not gone away so suddenly he would, in a few days' time, have said more to me.

My angel, when a man becomes conscious that he is powerless, when he finds satiety in happiness, when he feels, I will not say degraded, but without dignity in your presence, the blame his conscience will put upon him will cause him a species of remorse, painful to you because you will then feel yourself guilty of it. Then you will yourself despise the man you have not accustomed yourself to respect. Reflect on that. Contempt in a woman's heart is the first form of hatred. As you are noble in heart, you will always remember the sacrifices Felipe has made for you; but there will then be no more that he can make, having, as it were, served his whole self to you in this first love-feast; and sorrow

to the man and to the woman who leave no longer anything to be desired. All is then over.

Oh! Louise, change, change; there is still time. If you will behave with Macumer as I behave with Louis you can rouse the lion in that truly great man. Will you not feel a glorious pride in exercising your influence in higher ways than to your own profit, — in making a man of genius a great man, just as I am making a superior man out of a commonplace one?

If you had remained with us I should still have written you this letter. I should have feared your petulance and your wit in a conversation, whereas I know that you will reflect upon the future as you read my words. Dear soul! you have all things to make you happy; don't ruin your happiness! Go back in November to Paris. The occupations and distractions of society, of which I was disposed to complain, are, I see, diversions necessary to your home life, which is too intimate. A married woman should have her reserves, and so should a mother. The mother of a family who does not let her presence be desired by absenting herself sometimes from the household cheapens her value. If I have several children, which I desire for my own happiness, I declare to you that as soon as they reach a certain age I shall reserve to myself some hours every day in which to be alone; for I think we ought to be *desired* by every one, even our children.

Adieu, dear jealous one. Don't you know that a common woman would have been flattered to have caused you that rush of jealousy? Alas! I grieve over it; for I am, and can only be, a mother and a true friend. A thousand kisses. Say anything you like to excuse your departure; if you are not sure of Felipe, I *am* sure of Louis.

XXXVII.

MADAME DE MACUMER TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

GENOA.

MY DEAREST, — I have had a fancy to see Italy, and am delighted to have run away with Macumer, whose *projects* about Sardinia are postponed.

This glorious land enchants, nay, ravishes me. Here the churches, and especially the chapels, have a dainty, loving air which might make a Protestant long to be a Catholic. Macumer has been much fêted; the king congratulates himself on acquiring such a subject. If I desired it Felipe would be made Sardinian ambassador to France; we receive much attention at court.

If you write to me address your letters to Florence. I have no time to write to you in detail, but I will tell you about our journey when we meet in Paris. We shall stay here only one week; then we go to Florence

by Livorno, stay a month in Tuscany and a month at Naples, so as to reach Rome in November. We shall return by way of Venice, spend the first two weeks of December there, go to Milan and Turin, and be back in Paris for the month of January. It is like a wedding journey; the novelty of the scenes renews our dear honeymoon. Macumer has never been in Italy, and we have made our entrance by that glorious road, the Cornice, which must have been constructed by the fairies.

Adieu, my treasure. Don't be vexed if I can't write; it is impossible to get a moment to one's self in travelling. I have only time to see, feel, and gloat over my impressions. But as for telling them! I shall wait till they take the tints of memory.

XXXVIII.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME DE MACUMER.

September.

My dear Louise, — There is a long letter waiting you at Chantepleurs, — a reply to the one you wrote me from Marseille. This "wedding journey" which you tell me of, so far from diminishing the fears I have expressed to you in that letter, make me so anxious

that I beg you to write to the Nivernais and tell your people to forward it.

The ministry have resolved, they say, to dissolve the Chamber. If this is a misfortune for the crown, which ought to have employed this last session of the legislature in making laws necessary to the consolidation of its power, it is also a misfortune for us. Louis will not be forty until the close of 1827. Fortunately, my father consents to be made deputy, and will resign when the time comes.

Your godson has taken his first steps without his godmother; he is delightful in every way, and is beginning to make me those gracious little signs and gestures which tell me he is no longer an organism which sucks, a little animal, but a soul; his smiles are full of thoughts. I have been so fortunate in my nursing that I can wean him in December. One year suffices. Children who are suckled too long become stupid; I hold to all the old nurses' dictums.

You must be having a glorious success in Italy, my beautiful fair one. Tenderest love.

XXXIX.

MADAME DE MACUMER TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

ROME, December.

I HAVE received your infamous letter, which my steward, at my request, has forwarded from Chantepleurs. Oh, Renée! But I spare you all that my indignation suggests. I will tell you only the effects produced by your letter.

On our return from the fête given to us by the ambassador, where I shone with all my brilliancy, and from which Macumer returned in a passion of admiration for me I cannot describe to you, I read him your horrible letter; and I read it weeping, at the risk of looking ugly to him. My dear Saracen fell at my feet, calling you demented, drivelling; he took me to the balcony whence we could overlook a part of Rome. There his language was worthy of the scene that lay before our eyes, — for the moonlight was superb. As we have learned Italian, and always speak it now, his love, expressed in that soft language so favorable to passion, seemed to me sublime. He told me that even if you spoke the truth and were prophetic, he preferred an hour of love with me to a century of other life; that counting life as he did, he had already lived a thousand

years. He implored me to be ever his mistress, and said he wished no other title or distinction than that of my lover. He was, he said, so proud and happy in knowing, day by day, how dear he is to me, that if God appeared to him and bade him choose between thirty years of life according to your doctrines, with five children, and five years of life containing our precious, absorbing, exclusive love, his choice was made, — he would rather be loved as I love him, and die.

These protestations, said in my ear, my head on his shoulder, his arm round my waist, were suddenly interrupted by the cry of a bat or an owl. That omen of death made such a cruel impression on me that Felipe had to carry me, half-fainting, to my bed. But don't be anxious; although that horoscope echoed dismally through my soul, this morning I am quite well again. When I rose I threw myself on my knees before Felipe and with my eyes on his, his hands in mine, I said to him: —

"My angel, I am but a child; Renée may be right; perhaps it is only love that I love in thee; but be sure of this, that there is, and can be, no other sentiment in my heart, and that I love thee according to my nature. If in any of my ways, in the slightest things of my life and of my soul, there is anything contrary to what you wish, or have hoped for in me, tell me so, make me see

it! I shall be glad to listen to thee, and guide my conduct by the light in thine eyes. Renée frightens me, she loves me so!"

Macumer had no voice with which to answer me; he burst into tears. I thank you, Renée; I did not know till *now* how deeply my noble, my royal Macumer loves me. Rome is the city for love. When we have a passion it is here we should come; the arts and God are sharers in it.

We shall find the Duc and Duchesse de Soria in Venice. If you write, direct to Paris, for we leave Rome in three days; the ambassador's fête was given as a farewell to us.

P. S. Oh, you dear simpleton! your letter shows that you know nothing of love beyond ideas of it. Learn this: love is a principle, the effects of which are so dissimilar that no theory can embrace or lay down laws for them. This is meant for the instruction of my philosopher in petticoats.

XL.

THE COMTESSE DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME DE MACUMER.

January, 1827.

My father is elected deputy, my father-in-law is dead, and I am about to be confined again. Those

are the events of the close of this year in our household. I tell them to you at once to remove the painful impression of my black seal.

Dearest, your letter from Rome makes me tremble. You are two children. Felipe is either a diplomatist who is dissimulating, or a man who loves you as he would love a courtesan to whom he abandons fortune and all the higher qualities that are in him. You take me for a driveller, so I shall say no more, — except this: that in studying our two destinies I have come to a harsh conclusion: If you wish to be loved, *do not love.*

Louis obtained the cross of the Legion of honor when he was appointed member of the general council. Now, as he has been a member nearly three years, and as my father (whom you will no doubt see in Paris during the session) has asked for the grade of officer for his son-in-law, will you do me the kindness to employ a little strategy in the matter and keep a motherly eye upon it? But be sure not to meddle with the affairs of my very honored father, the Comte de Maucombe, who wants to be made a marquis; reserve all your favors for *me.* When Louis is a deputy, which will be next winter, we shall go to Paris, and move heaven and earth to obtain for him some place in the general government. I mean then to lay by our present income and live on the salary of the place. My

father's opinions are between the centre and the right, and he only wants a title. As our family was famous as far back as King René, Charles X. can hardly refuse a Maucombe. I am rather afraid my father may take it into his head to solicit some favor for my younger brother; but if the marquisate is kept dangling a little too high above his head he can only think of himself.

January 15.

Ah! Louise, I have been in hell! If I have the courage to speak to you of my sufferings it is because you are another myself. I shall try to never again let my thoughts go back to those five dreadful days. The very word "convulsion" sends a shudder through my being.

Five days! They were not days, they were five centuries of suffering. So long as a mother has not suffered this martyrdom she knows nothing of the meaning of that word "suffering." I thought how happy you were to have no children; judge by that how beside myself I was.

The evening before the terrible day, the weather, which was heavy and almost hot, seemed to oppress my little Armand. He, usually so gentle and caressing, was cross; he cried at everything; wanted to play and broke his toys. Perhaps all ailments first show themselves in children by a change of temper. After ob-

serving this unusual naughtiness I noticed that Armand flushed and then paled, — symptoms I attributed to the cutting of four large teeth which were all coming through at the same time. So I put him to bed near me, waking up constantly to watch him. During the night he had some fever; but that did not make me uneasy, for I still attributed it to the teeth. Toward morning he said, "Mamma!" asking for something to drink, but in such a voice, and with such a strange, convulsive gesture that my blood froze. I sprang from the bed to get him some sugared water. Imagine my horror when, on giving him the cup, I saw he was rigid; he kept repeating "Mamma," in that voice which was not his voice — indeed it was not a voice at all. I took his hand, it made no motion, it was stiff. I put the cup to his lips. The poor little fellow drank in a terrifying way, in convulsive gulps, and the water made a strange noise in his throat. Then he clutched desperately at me, and I saw his eyes turned by some inward power, till the whites only showed. I uttered a dreadful cry; Louis came.

"A doctor! a doctor!" I cried, "he is dying!"

Louis disappeared, and my poor Armand said again, "Mamma! mamma!" and clung to me. That was the last moment when he knew he had a mother. The pretty veins of his forehead were now injected, the convulsion began.

For a whole hour before the doctors came I held that child, — so vigorous, white and rosy, that flower, my pride, my joy, — stiff as a piece of wood; and what eyes! I shudder as I recall them. Black, shrunken, shrivelled, mute, my pretty Armand was a mummy. A doctor, two doctors, brought by Louis from Marseille, stood planted there upon their legs, like two birds of ill omen; they made me shudder. One talked of brain fever, the other said it was only convulsions common to children. The doctor from our village seemed to me the wisest, because he prescribed nothing. "It is teething," said one; "It is fever," said the other. At last they agreed to put leeches on the neck, and ice to the head.

I felt like dying. To see that blue-black body, with not a cry, not a motion, in place of a creature so full of life and noise. There was a moment when my mind wandered, and I laughed out loud when I saw the leeches hanging to that neck I loved to kiss, and that charming head with its cap of ice. Dear, they cut off all the hair you thought so pretty in order to apply the ice. Every ten minutes or so the convulsion returned; the poor child was twisted into every shape; he was sometimes pale, sometimes violet. When his limbs, always so soft and flexible, struck together they gave a sound like wood. That insensible little creature had smiled to me, spoken to me, and had just called me

"Mamma!" As I stood there helpless, volumes of anguish crossed my soul and convulsed it as hurricanes convulse the sea; I felt every tie by which a child is bound to our hearts shaken.

My mother, who might have helped, advised, supported me, was in Paris. Mothers know more about convulsions than doctors, I think. After four days and four nights, passed in alternations of hope and fear that nearly killed me, the doctors all agreed to apply a horrible ointment to make an open sore. Sore! on my Armand! who was playing and laughing five days earlier and learning to say "godmother!" I refused, and said it was best to trust to nature. Louis scolded me; he believed in the doctors. A man is always a man. In these terrible illnesses there comes a moment when death takes form, and during that moment this remedy, which I abhorred, seemed to me safety. Louise, the skin was so dry, so rough, so hard that the ointment could not bite it! Then I burst into tears, there at the bed's head — till the pillow was wet. The doctors! they were at dinner! Seeing myself alone, I stripped from my child those medical appliances; I took him, half beside myself, in my arms; I pressed him to my bosom, I leaned my forehead on his forehead, and I prayed to God to give him my life, striving with all my might to communicate it to him; I held him so for several minutes, thinking to die with him

rather than be separated by life or death. Dear, I felt his limbs relax; the tension yielded, my child moved, the horrible dark colors disappeared. I cried out as I did the night he was taken ill. The doctors came up; I showed them Armand.

"He is saved!" said the elder of them.

Oh! what words! what music! the heavens opened. Two hours later Armand was reborn. But I was annihilated. Without that balm of joy nothing could have saved me from an illness. Oh, my God! by what anguish hast thou attached the child to the mother. What hooks hast thou buried in our hearts to which he hangs! Was I not mother enough, I, who wept for joy at his first stammerings, his first steps, — I, who have studied my child for hours together, striving to know my duty and teach myself the dear profession of a mother? Was there need of causing me this terror; of showing these awful images to me who made my child an idol?

As I write to you, my Louise, our Armand is laughing and shouting and playing. I try to discover the cause of this horrible child's malady, remembering always that I am now pregnant. Was it teething? Was it some special action of the brain? Have children who endure these convulsions some imperfection in their nervous systems? All these ideas troubled me as much for the present as for the future. Our country

doctor says it is a nervous affection caused by teething. I 'd give all my teeth if Armand could only have all his. When I see one of those white pearls just piercing his inflamed gums, a cold sweat breaks out all over me.

The heroism with which my dear angel suffered shows me he will have something of my fortitude; he gave me glances that cleft my heart. The science of medicine does n't know much on the causes of that sort of tetanus, which ends almost as rapidly as it begins; and which cannot be prevented or cured. One thing is certain, I repeat it: to see her child in convulsions is hell for a mother. With what passion I kiss him now! How long I can hold him in my arms and carry him!

To have this anguish when I expect to be confined again in six weeks has been a terrible aggravation of the martydom; I fear its effects on the coming one.

Adieu, my dear beloved Louise; don't desire children, that 's my last word.

XLI.

MADAME DE MACUMER TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

PARIS.

POOR angel! Macumer and I forgave you all your *badnesses* on hearing of your troubles. I shuddered, I suf-

fered on reading the details of this double torture, and I certainly am less grieved at having no children. But let me hasten to tell you of Louis's appointment; he may now wear an officer's rosette. You want a little girl, and probably you will have one; your two wishes will be satisfied, oh, you lucky Renée!

The marriage of my brother and Mademoiselle de Mortsauf was celebrated on our return. Our charming king, who is really delightfully kind, gave my brother the reversion of the position of first gentleman of the Bed-chamber which his father-in-law now holds. "The office ought to go with the title," the king said to the Duc de Lenoncourt-Chaulieu; but he insisted that the arms of Mortsauf should be added to those of Lenoncourt.

My father was a hundred-fold right in all he preached to me. Without my fortune nothing of all this could have taken place. My father and mother came from Madrid to be present at the marriage, and return there the day after the fête I give to-morrow to the bride and bridegroom.

The carnival will be very brilliant this year. The Duc and Duchesse de Soria are in Paris. Their presence makes me rather uneasy. Marie Heredia is certainly one of the most beautiful women in Europe, and I don't like the way Felipe looks at her. So I have redoubled in tenderness to him. "*She* would never have loved you thus," is a speech I take care not to say

to him in words; but it is written in my looks and in all my movements. Heaven knows how coquettish and elegant I make myself. Yesterday Madame de Maufrigneuse said to me: "My dear, we must all lay down our arms to you."

The fact is I amuse Felipe so that he must think his sister-in-law as stupid as a Spanish cow. I don't so much regret not having a little Saracen of my own, because the duchess is on the point of being confined here in Paris, and it spoils her beauty; if she has a boy it is to be called Felipe in honor of the exiled brother. Malignant fate demands that I shall be its godmother.

Adieu, dearest. I shall go to Chantepleurs very early this year, for our journeyings have cost an exorbitant sum. I shall leave here by the end of March, and live economically in Nivernais. Besides, Paris bores me. Felipe sighs as I do for the dear solitude of our park, our cool meadows, and the Loire, spangled with its sands — ah! no river is like it. Chantepleurs will seem to me delightful after the pomps and vanities of even Italy; for, after all, such splendors do weary one, and the glance of a lover is more beautiful than any *capo d'opera*, whatever it may be.

We shall expect you there, and I promise not to be jealous of you again. You may sound the heart of my Macumer at your ease, and fish up all the interjections you like, and lay hold of all his scruples; I give him

over to you with superb confidence. Ever since that scene in Rome Felipe loves me more than ever. He told me yesterday (he is looking over my shoulder as I write) that his sister-in-law, the Marie of his youth, his betrothed Marie, the Princess Heredia, his earliest dream, was — stupid! Oh, dearest, I am worse than an opera-girl; that speech gave me pleasure! I had remarked to Felipe that she spoke French incorrectly; she pronounces *sain* for *cinq*, and *cheu* for *je;* and then, she may be beautiful, but she has no grace, and not the slightest vivacity of mind. When one pays her compliments she looks at you like a woman who is not accustomed to receive them. With a nature like his, Felipe would have left her two months after marriage. The Duc de Soria, Don Fernando, is very well suited to her; he is generous, but he is a spoilt child, — it is easy enough to see that. There! I might be satirical, and make you laugh; but I 'll say no more than the truth.

Tender regards, my darling.

XLII.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME DE MACUMER.

My little girl is two weeks old; my mother was sponsor, together with an old grand-uncle of Louis's. We have called her Jeanne Athénaïs.

As soon as I am able I will pay you a visit at Chantepleurs, as you are not afraid of a wet-nurse, which is my present vocation. Your godson says your name; only he calls it *Matoumer*, for he cannot pronounce his *c's*. You'll dote on him. He has cut all his teeth, and eats meat like a big boy; and he runs about and thrusts his nose into everything like a rat. But I watch him always with anxious eyes; and I am in despair that I cannot have him with me during my confinement; the doctor insists on forty days in my room for the sake of certain precautions. Alas! my child, there's no such thing as getting accustomed to child-bearing. The same pains, the same apprehensions return.

My father thought Felipe thinner, and my dear darling also. And yet the Duc and Duchesse de Soria have left Paris, and you have no longer the slightest ground for jealousy. Are you hiding some trouble from me? Your letter was not as long nor as affectionately *thought* as usual. Perhaps, however, it is only a caprice of my dear capricious one.

I have written too much; my nurse is scolding me for writing at all, and Mademoiselle Athénaïs de l'Estorade wants her dinner. Adieu; write me one of your good long letters.

XLIII.

MADAME DE MACUMER TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

For the first time in my life, dear Renée, I have wept alone, under a willow, on a wooden bench, beside my long pond at Chantepleurs, — a delightful spot and view which you will embellish when you come, for the only thing wanting is joyous children. Your fruitfulness makes me think sadly of myself, who have no children after nearly three years of marriage. "Oh," I say in my heart, "if I had to suffer a hundred-fold more than Renée suffered in giving birth to my godson, even if I had to see my child in convulsions, grant, O God! that I have an angelic creature like that little Naïs — who I know is as beautiful as the day, though you did not tell me so. Ah! I recognize my Renée there — you divined my sufferings. Each time that my hopes have failed me, I am for days a victim to the blackest grief. I sing dirges: When shall I embroider little caps? When shall I choose linen for my baby's clothes? When shall I sew the pretty laces to wrap a little head? Am I never to hear a baby creature call me mother, or feel it pull my gown and be my tyrant? Shall I see no traces of those little feet upon the sand, no broken toys about the house? Am I never to buy, as I watch many mothers buying, the coveted things, —

the sabres, dolls, the little tea-sets? And oh! shall I never see that life, that angel soul develop and be to me another Felipe, only more dear? Oh! I want a son to learn how to love a lover more in another himself.

Everything about me, my park, the château, seems deserted and drear. A woman without children is unnatural; we are made to be mothers. Oh! philosopher in petticoats that you are, you have seen life rightly. Barrenness is horrible in everything. My life is too like the sheepfolds of Gessner and Florian, in which Rivarol declared they longed for wolves.

I long to devote myself as you do! I feel within me powers which Felipe neglects; and if I am not to be a mother, fate must bring me some misfortune or some trial. I have just been saying that to my Spanish Moor, and the speech brought the tears to his eyes; however, I made it right by calling him a sublime goose; it won't do to joke about his love.

Sometimes I think I will make *neuvaines*, and pray for children to certain madonnas, or go to certain baths. Next winter I will consult the doctors. I am too furious against myself to tell you more just now. Adieu.

XLIV.

SAME TO SAME.

PARIS, 1829.

MY DEAREST RENÉE, — Why have you left me a whole year without a letter? I am piqued. Do you think that your Louis (who comes to see me every other day) can take your place? It is not enough for me to know that you are well, and that all your affairs are satisfactory; I want your feelings and your ideas, just as I give you mine at the risk of being scolded, or blamed, or misunderstood, for I love you. Your silence and your burial in the country, when you might be here enjoying the parliamentary triumphs of the Comte de l'Estorade, (whose *speechifyings* and devotion have given him a great influence, and will place him very high before the session is over) make me uneasy. Do you spend your life writing him instructions? Numa did n't go so far from his Egeria. Why did n't you seize this occasion to come to Paris? I should have had you four months. Louis told me yesterday that you were coming to fetch him, and to be confined for the third time in Paris — dreadful Mother Gigogne that you are!

After numberless questions and many sighs and plaints, Louis, though now diplomatic, ended by telling me that his great-uncle, the godfather of Athénaïs, was

very ill. So I suppose that in your capacity as a good mother of a family you are making the most of the glory of your deputy to obtain a satisfactory legacy from his maternal relative. Well, we will look after your interests here. Don't be anxious, my Renée; the Lenoncourts, the Chaulieus, and the salon of Madame de Macumer are all at work for Louis. Martignac will probably put him in the Cour des Comptes.

But if you don't tell me what keeps you in the country I shall be angry. Is it to let no one find out that you are the mainspring and policy of the house of l'Estorade; or can it be for the uncle's legacy; or do you fear to be less a mother in Paris? Oh, how I would like to know whether it is that you don't want to be seen here for the first time in your present state. Oh, coquette!

Adieu.

XLV.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME DE MACUMER.

You complain of my silence; you forget the two little brown heads which I govern, and which govern me. Besides, you have discovered for yourself some of the reasons that keep me in the country.

In addition to my duty to our dear old uncle, I did not wish to drag a boy of four and a little girl almost

three to Paris, when I myself was again pregnant. I did not want to embarrass your life or your household with such a party, and — you are right enough — I shrank from appearing to my own disadvantage in the brilliant world in which you reign; and as for lodging-houses and hotels, I have a horror of them.

Louis's great-uncle, on hearing of his nephew's appointment, gave me half his savings, — two hundred thousand francs, and told me to buy a house in Paris; and Louis has just been requested by him to look for one in your quarter. My mother gives me some thirty thousand francs with which to furnish it. So when I do go to Paris for a session it will be to my own home; where I shall endeavor to be worthy, in all sincerity be it said, of the sister of my choice.

I thank you for having placed Louis so favorably with the court; but in spite of the esteem shown for him by Messieurs de Bourmont and de Polignac, who want to have him in their ministry, I don't want him to be so conspicuous; a man is soon compromised in office. I prefer the position in the Cour des Comptes, which is irremovable. Our affairs here are in very good hands; as soon as our bailiff is quite accustomed to his work I shall go and second Louis; don't be afraid.

As for writing long letters, how can I? This one, in which I want to describe to you my every-day life, will

lie on my writing-table a week, I am very sure. Perhaps Armand will make it into tents for his army of tin soldiers drawn up on my carpet, or into ships for the fleet that sails his bath-tub.

One of my days will suffice to tell you all; they are precisely alike and are reduced to two events, — the children are ill, or the children are well. As for me, the simple fact is that in my solitary manor minutes are hours, or hours are minutes, according to the condition of the children. If I have some delightful hours it is after they are in bed, and I have finished rocking one or telling stories to the other to send them to sleep. When I know they are safely asleep beside me I say: "There! I 've nothing more to fear."

To tell the truth, my dearest, during the daytime all mothers invent dangers as soon as the children are out of sight. There are razors for Armand to play with, fire to catch his jacket, a slow-worm to bite him, a fall to bump his head, and ponds to tumble into. So you see that maternity is a series of poems, sweet or terrible as the case may be. There 's not an hour which does not have its joys and fears.

But at night, in my room, comes the hour of waking dreams, when I settle their destinies. Their lives are then lighted by the smiles of angels hovering about their beds. Sometimes Armand calls me in his sleep; I stoop down to kiss his forehead or his sister's feet

and contemplate them both, lying there in their beauty. Those are my festivals! Last night our guardian angel (as I think) made me run from my bed to Naïs's crib, and there I found her with her head too low; and Armand in his, with his legs uncovered and violet with cold. "Ah, little mother!" he said, waking up and kissing me. There, my dear, is a night scene for you.

How wise it is for a mother to have her children always beside her. Can any nurse, no matter how good she is, take them up and comfort them and put them to sleep again when waked by some nightmare as we can? For children do have bad dreams; and to explain one of them is all the more difficult because a child listens with an eye that is sleepy and scared, intelligent and idiotic, all at once; the moment is like an organ-rest between two sleeps. In consequence, my sleep has become so light that I see my little ones and hear them through the gauze of my eyelids. I wake at a sigh, a motion. The monster of convulsions is, for me, always crouching beside their beds.

At daylight the children's prattle begins with the first chirping of the birds. Through the veils of my last sleep their chattering sounds like the warblings at dawn, the disputes of the swallows, — little joyous or plaintive cries, which I hear less with my ears than

my heart. While Naïs tries to work her way from her crib to my bed by pulling herself along by her hands and taking tottering steps, Armand has clambered in like a monkey and is kissing me. Together they make my bed a playground, and the mother is at their mercy. The baby pulls my hair and still wants to suck, while Armand defends my breast as if it were his possession. I can't resist some of their attitudes and their pretty laughs, which explode like rockets. Then we play at ogres and the mother ogress devours with kisses the rosy flesh so soft and dewy, and the eyes so arch with mischief, and the pink shoulders, — which excites a world of little jealousies, all charming. Some days I begin to put on my stockings at eight o'clock, and they are not really on till nine.

Then, my dear, there 's the getting up. Dressing begins. I slip on my wrapper, and turn up the sleeves, and put a waterproof apron in front of me; I bathe and I clean my two little flowers, with Mary's assistance. I alone am the judge of the warmth of the water, for the temperature of a bath counts for half in the cries and tears of children. Then come fleets of paper boats, and flocks of glass ducks; for children's minds must be amused if you want to clean them properly. If you only knew how many pleasures I have to invent for these autocrats in order to push a sponge into every nook and corner you would be

appalled at the cleverness and cunning a mother's trade requires, if accomplished triumphantly. I entreat and scold and promise; I am a humbug of the first water, and all the more because my wheedling has to be ingeniously concealed. No one knows how shrewd children are; God was forced to give the mother a little cunning. A child is a great politician, whom we master as we do a politician, — by his passions. Luckily, these angels find amusement in everything. A brush falls, the soap slips; thereupon gurgles of laughter.

Well, if the triumphs are dearly bought, they are triumphs. God alone (for the father knows nothing of all this) God and you and the angels alone know what looks I exchange with Mary when, after dressing our two little treasures, we behold them, both in perfect array, amid the combs and brushes and sponges and tubs and flannels and the thousand and one details of a *nursery*. I have become so English on this point that I admit the women of that country have a genius for raising children. Though they consider them solely from the point of view of material and physical well-being, they are right in their general system. My children shall always have their feet in flannel and their legs bare. They shall not be swathed and compressed; and never will I allow them to be left alone. The imprisonment of French children in swaddling-clothes

means liberty for the nurse ; there 's the secret of them. A true mother is never at liberty, and that is why I have not written to you, — having on my hands the management of this estate, and two children to bring up.

The science of motherhood carries with it many a silent merit, ignored by all and without parade, — virtue in small things, devotion at all hours. You don't think me a woman to withhold myself from a single care, do you? In the least of them there is some affection to be gleaned. Oh ! it is so pretty to see a child's smile when he likes his little dinner. Armand has a way of nodding his head which is worth a whole lifetime of love. Why should I leave to another woman the care and pleasure of blowing on a spoonful of soup which Naïs thinks too hot, she whom I weaned at seven months but who still remembers the breast? When a nurse has burned the tongue and lips of a child with something hot she tells the mother it is hunger that makes it cry. To mince up a cutlet for Naïs (who has not yet got her last teeth) and mix it with potato is a work of patience ; and really, it is only a mother who, in certain cases, can make an impatient child eat all the food he ought to take at a meal.

Ah ! no, Louise, we must care for these dear innocents with our souls ; we must trust our own eyes only, our own hands only in dressing them and feeding them

and putting them to sleep. A child's cry is just cause of blame to a mother or nurse, unless it proceeds from some illness ordained by nature. Since I have had two (and I shall soon have three) to care for I have had nothing in my soul but my children. Even you, whom I love so much, have been a memory to me. I am not always dressed by two o'clock. Therefore I say, don't trust the motherliness of mothers whose rooms and gowns and collars are in order.

I must tell you what happened yesterday. The day was so fine I wanted to take my cherubs for a last walk before my confinement, which is close at hand. Well, for a mother, this going out to walk is a poem, looked forward to from night till morn. Armand was to wear for the first time a black velvet jacket, a new collaret I had embroidered for him, and a Scotch cap of the Stuart tartan with a cock's feather. Nais was in pink and white, with a delicious baby-cap, — for she is still a baby, though she will soon lose that pretty name when the little one (whom I feel kicking me and whom I call *my pauper*, because he is the younger brother) comes into the world. I've seen him in my dreams, and I know he is a boy.

Well, caps and collars, jacket and stockings, dainty little shoes, pink garters for the legs, and the muslin frock embroidered in silk, were all laid out upon my bed. When these gay little birds who agree so well

had been duly brushed and curled (the hair of the baby softly bordering her pink and white cap), when the shoes were buttoned and the little naked legs skipped round the nursery, when the two "*clean faces*" as Mary called them, and the sparkling eyes had cried out, "Come, let's go," I quivered and palpitated. Oh! to see that skin we have bathed and sponged ourselves, so fair and fresh with its pretty blue veins, heightened by contrast with the velvet or silk, — why, it is better than a poem! With what passion, never satisfied, do we call them to us for one more kiss on the little necks, prettier than those of the prettiest women! Those little scenes the vulgarest colored pictures of which all mothers stop to look at in the shop windows — I make them every day!

Once out-of-doors, I was proudly enjoying my labors, admiring my little Armand, who looked like the son of a prince and was leading the baby along that little road you remember near our house, when a carriage came by. I tried to draw them aside, and somehow they both tumbled into a mud-puddle, and there were my works of art, my masterpieces, destroyed! I snatched up the baby in my arms, not caring that I ruined my gown, and Mary laid hands on Armand, and we brought them home. When a baby cries and a child gets wet, that's enough; a mother can't think of herself, she is otherwise absorbed.

Dinner-time comes, and I have usually done nothing at all. How to serve both, to put on their napkins, turn up my cuffs, and feed the two is a problem I solve twice a day. As for me, I am the one neglected in the household; often, if the children have been naughty, I am still in curl-papers. My toilet depends on their good behavior. To have a moment to myself, in order to write you these six pages, I have let them cut pictures from my novels and build castles with my books and chequers and mother-of-pearl counters. Naïs is at this moment winding my wools to please herself, in so intricate a manner that she is giving all her little mind to it and does n't say a word.

After all, I have nothing to complain of; my children are robust and free, and they amuse themselves with much less trouble to me than you might think. They are pleased with everything. What they need is liberty, — properly watched, of course; they like that better than toys. A few colored pebbles, pink and yellow, purple or black, little shells, wonders in the sand, are their delight. To possess a great many small things appears to be their idea of wealth. I watch Armand; he talks to the flowers, the flies, the hens; he imitates them; he is on good terms with the insects, which fill him with admiration. All that is small interests them. Armand is beginning to ask the *why* of things. He came just now to see what I was saying to his god-

mother; he takes you for a fairy — there, see what intelligent minds children have!

Alas! my angel, I said I would not sadden you again with my happiness. One thing more I must tell you to paint your godson. The other day a poor man followed us; for the poor know well that no mother accompanied by her child ever denies them alms. Armand does not yet know that any one can want for bread; he is ignorant of what money is, but as he had wished for a trumpet and I had just bought him one, he held it out to the old man saying: —

"Here, take that."

"Will you permit me to keep it?" said the poor man looking at me.

What is there on earth that could be put into the balance with my joy at that moment?

"You see, madame, I have children, too," said the old man, taking the alms I gave him, without even looking at them.

When I reflect that I must soon put a child like Armand to school, that I have only three and a half years more to keep him with me, I cannot help trembling. A public school will mow down the flowers of this blessed childhood; it will *denaturalize* those graces, crush that adorable frankness! They will cut the pretty curls I have so bathed and cleaned and kissed. But what will they do with Armand's soul?

Enough! let me turn to you. What has become of you? You tell me nothing of your life. Do you love Felipe as before? As for the Saracen himself, I am not uneasy about his love. Adieu; Naïs has just tumbled down; if I wished to continue that drama this letter would be a volume.

XLVI.

MADAME DE MACUMER TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

CHANTEPLEURS, 1829.

THE newspapers will have told you, my good and tender Renée, of the terrible misfortune which has befallen me. I could not write to you. I remained at his bedside for twenty nights and days; I closed his eyes; I watched his body with the priests; I said the prayers for the dead. I inflicted upon myself the chastisement of these awful sufferings; and yet, when I saw upon those lips serene the smile he gave me just before he died I could not believe that my love had killed him. But he *is not,* and I, *I am!* To you who knew us both what can I tell you more? All is in those two sentences.

Oh! if any one would tell me he could be recalled to life, I would give my hopes of heaven to hear the words — for I should see him! To clasp him once

would let me breathe, if only for a single instant, without this dagger in my heart.

Will you not come and tell me that? Do you not love me enough to deceive me? But, no, no! you told me beforehand that I was cruelly injuring him. Was it true? Yes, I did not deserve his love; you were right; I stole it. Happiness! I choked it in my mad embrace. Oh! writing to you now, I am not mad, but I feel myself alone. O God, what is there in thy hell beyond that word?

When they took him from me I laid myself down in his bed, hoping to die there; for there was but a door between us, and I thought I had power to open it. But alas! I was too young; and after an illness of forty days, during which they fed me with those frightful appliances of a dreary science, I was brought to Chantepleurs, where I now am, sitting at my window, among the flowers he planted for me, before that glorious view on which his eyes so often wandered rejoicing in the thought that he had discovered it — because it pleased me! Ah, dearest, the pain of changing one's abode when the heart is dead is dreadful. The damp soil of my garden makes me shudder; the earth is like a vast grave, and I fancy I am walking over *him*. When I first went out I was afraid of it, and stood motionless. Oh, it is so dreary to see *his* flowers without *him*.

My mother and father are both in Spain; you know what my brothers are; and you yourself are obliged to stay at La Crampade; but do not be uneasy, two angels have come to me. The Duc and Duchesse de Soria, those dear beings, came instantly to their brother. During the last nights our three griefs were calm and silent around the bed where one of those rare men who are truly noble, truly grand, and superior to us in all things, lay dying. His patience was divine. The sight of his brother and Marie revived his soul for a moment and calmed his sufferings.

"Dear," he said to me, with that simplicity he showed in all things, "I was about to die forgetting to give Fernando the barony of Macumer. I must make another will. My brother will forgive this want of thought, for he knows what it is to love."

I owe my life to the care of my brother-in-law and his wife; they want to take me back with them to Spain.

Ah! Renée, to you alone can I tell the whole truth of this disaster. The sense of my wrong-doing crushes me; it is a bitter consolation to confess it to you, — poor, unheeded Cassandra! I killed him by my exactions, my groundless jealousies, my perpetual controversies. My love was the more terrible in its effects because we both had the same extreme sensitiveness; we spoke the same soul language; he felt everything

intensely, and often my jesting, unawares to me, cut him to the heart. You cannot imagine to what lengths that dear slave carried his obedience. Sometimes I would tell him to go away and leave me alone, and he would go without discussing a caprice from which, perhaps, he suffered. To his last breath he blessed me; repeating that a single morning alone with me was more to him than a long life with any other beloved woman, were it even Marie Heredia. I weep as I write these words.

I rise at mid-day, I go to bed at seven in the evening, I spend an unconscionable time at my meals, I walk slowly, I stop an hour before some plant, I gaze at the foliage, I busy myself deliberately and gravely about trifles, I love shade and silence and the darkness, I struggle through the hours and add them one by one with gloomy pleasure to the past. The quiet of my park is the only companionship I wish for; there I find the glorious images of my buried happiness, invisible to others, living and eloquent to me.

My sister-in-law flung herself into my arms when I said to her one morning: —

"I cannot endure your presence any longer! Spaniards have something grander than we have in their souls!"

Ah! Renée, if I am not dead it is that God no doubt apportions our sense of misery to our strength.

None but women know the extent of our loss when we lose a love without one taint of hypocrisy, the love of our choice, a lasting passion whose pleasures satisfied both soul and nature. How often is it granted to women to meet a man with such high qualities that they can love him and not degrade themselves? To meet him is the greatest joy that can come to women; it can come to them only once. Men truly great and strong, you in whom virtue hides beneath poesy, you whose souls possess a lofty charm, men made to be adored, keep yourselves from loving, or you will cause the misery of a woman and your own!

That is what I cry aloud in my wood-paths. And no child by him! That unquenchable love that smiled upon me ever, a love that showered only flowers and bliss upon me, that love to be barren! I am an accursed creature. Must love, pure and violent as it is when absolute, be as unfruitful as aversion, — just as the heated sands of the desert and the frozen region of the pole produce no life? Must one marry a de l'Estorade to have a family? Is God displeased with love? Oh! what am I saying?

You are the only being I can endure beside me. Come to me; you alone should be with your Louise in mourning. What a horrible day that was when I put a widow's cap upon my head! When I saw myself in black, the emblem of my life, I fell upon a seat and

wept till night. I weep still as I tell you of that moment.

Adieu; writing fatigues me. I am weary of my thoughts; I cannot any longer express them. Bring your children; you can nurse the last one here. There is no jealousy now; *he* is gone, and my godson will be a pleasure to me; Felipe longed for a child which should be like our little Armand. Yes, Renée, come and take your share in my grief.

XLVII.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME DE MACUMER.

1829.

Dearest, when you hold this letter in your hand I shall not be far off, for I start almost directly after dispatching it. We shall be alone. Louis is obliged to remain in Provence on account of the elections which are about to take place; he wants to be re-elected, and schemes are already laid against him by the liberals.

I do not come to console you; I bring only my heart to bear company with yours and help you, if I can, to live. I come to bid you weep; thus you will buy the happiness of rejoining him; he is only gone to God, and every step you take will lead you to him; each duty

done shortens by one link the chain that parts you. Ah! my Louise, you will yet arise and go to him, pure and noble, — forgiven for your involuntary faults, and followed by the works that you will do in his name here below.

I write these lines in haste in the midst of preparations; Armand is crying out: "Godmother! godmother! we are going to see her!" He makes me jealous; he is half your son.

SECOND PART.

XLVIII.

MADAME DE MACUMER TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

October 15, 1833.

Well, yes, Renée, they have told you the truth, or partly the truth. I have sold my house in Paris, I have sold Chantepleurs and the farms in the Seine-et-Marne; but I am not crazy, and not ruined; as I will show you in figures.

After that fatal blow which broke the mainspring of my life, I possessed the fortune of my poor Macumer, — some twelve hundred thousand francs. I shall now render you, as a trusted sister, a faithful account of it. I put a million into the Three-per-cents when they were at fifty, and I thus gained an income of sixty thousand francs instead of thirty thousand, which was all I could get from landed property. To spend six months of the year in the country, looking after leases, listening to the complaints of farmers (who will pay their rents only when they choose); to be bored to death, like a sportsman, on rainy days; to have crops to sell

and let them go at a loss; to live in Paris in a house that represents ten thousand francs a year; to keep my funds with a notary, and worry about interest; to sue people who don't pay, and study the law of mortgages, — in short, to have business matters in Nivernais, Seine-et-Marne, and Paris, — what a burden, what a bore, and above all, what mistakes and losses would result for a widow only twenty-seven years old!

Now my fortune is secured on the budget. Instead of paying taxes to the State, I receive from it, without costs, thirty thousand francs every six months, paid at the Treasury by a smiling little clerk, who gives me thirty bank-notes of a thousand francs each. "Suppose France becomes bankrupt?" I hear you say. In the first place, I never take woes ahead. But even so, France could only cut off half my income; I should be as well-off as I was before I made the investment. Such catastrophes happen only once in a century, and that leaves me plenty of time to make another fortune by economy. Besides, is n't the Comte de l'Estorade a peer of the semi-republican France of July? Is n't he one of the supporters of the crown offered by the *people* to the King of the French? Need I be anxious when I have for my friend a president of the Cour des Comptes?

Who dares say now that I am crazy? I can calculate almost as well as your citizen-king. But do you know what gives algebraic wisdom to a woman? — Love.

Alas! the moment has come when I must explain to you the mysteries of my conduct, the motives of which have eluded your perspicacity, your inquisitive affection, and your cleverness. I am about to be married, privately, in a village near Paris. I love, and I am loved. I love as much as a woman who knows what love is can love. I am loved as much as a man should love the woman who adores him.

Forgive me, Renée, for concealing the truth from you as well as from all the world. If your Louise has deceived all eyes and misled all inquiry, you, at least, will admit that my passion for my poor Macumer demanded that secrecy. Besides, you and l'Estorade would have harassed me with doubts, bewildered me with remonstrances. Even circumstances might have helped you. You alone know the point to which I can be jealous, and you might have uselessly tortured me.

What you will now call my folly, Renée, I was determined to do alone, out of my own head, my own heart, like a young girl who escapes the watchfulness of her parents. My lover's fortune is thirty thousand francs' worth of debts, which I have paid. What a topic for your remarks! You would have proved to me that Gaston was a sharper, and your husband would have spied upon him. I preferred to do the spying myself.

It is now twenty-two months since he first courted

me. I am twenty-seven, he is twenty-three. Between a woman who is the elder and a man, this difference is enormous. Another cause, you would say, of unhappiness! Also he is a poet, and lives by his work, — which is as good as telling you he lives on next to nothing. This dear lizard of a poet is oftener in the sun, building his castles in the air, than in his underground lair writing poems. Writers, artists, all those who exist by thought only, are usually taxed with inconstancy by practical persons. They espouse and conceive so many fancies that it is natural to suppose that their heads react upon their hearts.

But, in spite of the paid debts, in spite of the difference of age, in spite of the poesy, after nine months of a gallant struggle, and without so much as having let him kiss my hand — after the purest and most delicious courtship, I give myself; I do not yield myself passively as I did eight years ago, ignorant and inexperienced; I *give* myself, and the gift is accepted with such submission that I might even delay another year before the marriage takes place. But there is not the least servility in this; there is deference in it, but not submission. Never did I meet a nobler heart, nor more of strength in tenderness, nor more of soul in love than in my beloved. Alas! my Renée, it comes to him by nature. Let me tell you his history in two words.

My lover has no other name than that of Marie Gaston. He is the natural son of that beautiful Lady Brandon, of whom you must have heard, who died near Tours, at La Grénadière, killed by grief caused by the vengeance of Lady Dudley, — a horrible history, of which her son knows nothing. Marie Gaston was placed by his brother Louis Gaston at school in Tours, where he stayed till 1827. Soon after placing him there his brother went to sea to seek his fortune; so an old woman who has been Marie's Providence assured him. Louis, then in the navy, wrote to him from different ports letters that were truly fatherly, — the letters of a noble soul; but he never returned to France. In his last letter he told Marie Gaston of his promotion to the rank of post-captain in some American republic, I don't remember which, and exhorted him to hope. Alas! for three years my poor poet has received no further letter, and he loves his brother so much that he wanted at first to go in search of him. But our great writer, Daniel d'Arthèz, has prevented such folly, and has interested himself deeply in Marie Gaston, to whom he has often given, as my poet says in his picturesque language, "the bite and sup."

Judge, now, of the lad's distress; he imagined that genius was the surest and most rapid means of fortune! That will surely make you laugh for twenty-four hours. From 1828 to 1833 he has been trying to win for himself

a name in letters, and he has consequently led a most frightful life of anguish, hope, toil, and starvation. Led on by his extreme ambition, against the wiser counsels of his friend d'Arthèz, he only managed to roll up the snowball of his debts. His name was beginning to be known when I chanced to meet him at Madame d'Espard's. There, without a thought of such a thing entering his mind, I felt drawn to love him, sympathetically, at first sight. Why has no one loved him already? Why is he left for me? I asked myself. Oh, he has genius and intellect, heart and pride, — it must be that women are afraid of greatness so complete! Did it not take a hundred victories to show Josephine a Napoleon in the little Bonaparte, her husband?

His innocent heart thinks it knows how much I love him! Poor Gaston! he has no conception of it. But to you I will tell it; you ought to know it, for, Renée, this letter is, as it were, my will and testament. Meditate on what I say.

At this moment I have the certainty of being loved as much as a woman can be loved upon this earth; and I have faith in this conjugal life to which I bring a love I never felt before. Yes, I know at last the pleasure of returning a passion. What all women ask of love, marriage will give me. I feel for Gaston the passion I inspired in my poor Felipe. I am no longer mistress of myself; I tremble before that child as Felipe

trembled before me. In short, I love more than I am loved; I am afraid of everything; my fears are ridiculous; I fear to be deserted; I tremble lest I be old and ugly while Gaston is still young and handsome; I tremble at the thought that I may not please him always. And yet I think I possess the faculties, the devotion, the sense necessary, not to preserve only, but also to nurture and increase his love, if far from the world, in solitude. That is my dream.

If I fail, if the magnificent poem of this secret love should have an end — what am I saying, an *end!* — nay, if Gaston loves me one day less than the day before, and I perceive it, Renée, remember, I shall blame myself, not him. It will not be his fault; it will be mine. I know myself. I am more of a loving woman than a mother; and I tell you in advance that if this happened to me I should die, even though I might have children. And before I enter into these new bonds, my Renée, I implore you, should any evil come to me, to be a mother to my children; I here bequeath them to you. The knowledge of your fanaticism for duty, your precious qualities, your love for children, your love for me, — *all* that I know of you will render death less bitter; I dare not say more sweet.

This fixed idea within my mind adds a nameless terror to the ceremony of this marriage; that is why I cannot have those who know me witness it; it will be

solemnized in secret. I can tremble more at ease if I do not see in your dear eyes a disquietude I cannot bear. I alone shall feel, as I sign this second register of marriage, that I may have signed my death-warrant.

I shall never speak again of the pact now made between myself and the self I am going to become. I confide it to you here, that you may know, if evil happens to me, the extent of the duty I lay upon you.

I marry free, absolutely independent as to property, and knowing that I am rich enough for us both to live at our ease, I can dispose of my fortune in what manner I choose. As I do not wish to humiliate either of us, I have placed twelve thousand francs a year in Gaston's name; he will find the first year's income in his desk the evening before our marriage, and if he does not accept them I will suspend everything. I was obliged to threaten not to marry him to obtain the right to pay his debts.

Ah! Renée, I am weary with writing to you all these confessions. Day after to-morrow I will tell you more; but to-morrow I am obliged to go into the country for the whole day.

October 20th.

I have taken measures to hide my happiness, for I desire to evade all occasions for my fatal jealousy. I am like that beautiful Italian princess who rushed to Switzerland to devour her prey after springing upon it

like a lioness. So, though I am now going to tell you of all my arrangements, I beg of you not to come and see us unless I ask you to do so; and to respect the seclusion in which I wish to live.

About two years ago I bought some twenty acres of meadow land, with a fringe of woods and a fine fruit-garden, above the ponds of Ville d'Avray, on the road to Versailles. At the lower end of the meadows the ground has been excavated so as to form a pond about three acres in extent, in the middle of which is an island gracefully outlined. Two pretty wooded hills close in this valley and send delicious little brooks to filter through my park, where they have been judiciously distributed by my architect. These waters fall into the ponds on the crown lands which can be seen through an opening in the trees. The park, admirably laid out by the same architect, is, according to the nature of the land, enclosed by hedges, walls, and sunken fences, so that no point of view is lost. Half way up the slope, at a spot flanked by the woods of La Ronce, with a delightful prospect, facing a meadow running down to the pond, I have built a chalet, the exterior of which exactly reproduces that on the road from Sion to Brieg which so delighted me on our way back from Italy. Within, its elegance surpasses that of all the famous chalets.

About a hundred yards from this rustic dwelling is

a charming construction which groups together the kitchen, offices, stables, and coach-houses, and communicates with the Chalet by an underground way. Of all these various buildings, made of brick, the eye sees only a façade of graceful simplicity, surrounded by shrubs and trees. The gardener's house is another ornamental building, which masks the entrance to the orchard and kitchen-gardens.

The entrance gate to this property, in the wall on the woodland side, is almost undiscoverable. The plantations, already of some height, will completely hide the buildings in a few years; my idea of retirement will be completely carried out; passers along the roads will know of our abode only by the smoke rising above the trees in summer, or in winter when the leaves have fallen.

The Chalet stands in the midst of grounds designed after those they call the "King's Garden" at Versailles; but it has, in addition, a view of my pond and island. On all sides the hill-slopes show their foliage, the foliage of the fine trees now so cared for by the new Civil list. My gardeners have orders to cultivate only the sweetest-smelling flowers, and those by thousands; so that this little corner of the earth will be a perfumed emerald. The Chalet, adorned with a wild grape-vine which clambers over the roof, is literally swathed in climbing plants, clematis, jasmine, hop, and cobea. He

who can distinguish our windows amid their luxuriance may boast of having seen a rare sight!

This chalet, my dear, is a good and fine house, with its *calorifères* and all the improvements introduced by modern architecture, — which nowadays builds palaces on a hundred square feet of ground. It contains a suite of rooms for Gaston and a suite of rooms for me. The ground-floor is occupied by an antechamber, a parlor, and a dining-room. Above us are three rooms destined for the *nursery*. I have five superb horses, a little coupé, very light, and a *milord* for two horses. We are less than forty minutes from Paris; and if we want to hear an opera, or see a new piece at the theatres, we have only to drive in after dinner and return to our nest at night. The road is fine and runs under the shadow of our own woods for some distance.

My servants, the cook, coachman, groom, gardeners, and the lady's-maid are all worthy persons, who will be under the direction of my good old Philippe. Though I think I may be sure of their discretion, I hold them partly by their interests; their wages are small, with the promise of an increase each year by a new-year's gift. They all know that the slightest fault, or the mere suspicion of their being indiscreet, would cause them to lose immense advantages. Loving persons never worry their servants, — they are indulgent; and so I think I may rely on my people.

All that was precious, and beautiful, and elegant in my house in the rue du Bac, is now in the Chalet. The Rembrandt (which is neither more nor less than a daub) is on the staircase; the Hobbema is in *his* study, opposite to the Rubens; the Titian which my sister-in-law sent me from Madrid, adorns the boudoir; those beautiful pieces of furniture Felipe found look well in the parlor, which the architect has decorated exquisitely. Everything about the Chalet is charming, — simple with the simplicity that costs a fortune. The ground-floor, being built over a cellar with stone foundation-walls laid in cement, and scarcely visible behind the plants and shrubs, is delightfully cool but never damp. A flock of white swans are floating on the pond at the foot of the lawn.

Oh, Renée! a silence to rejoice the dead reigns in this valley. We shall be wakened by the song of birds, or the shivering of the poplars to the breeze. A little brook comes down the hillside and runs to the pond over silvery sands between banks of water-cress; I don't know that any money could have bought that! But oh! will Gaston think these charms are too complete and so dislike them? All is so beautiful that I tremble at it; worms are in the finest fruits, insects attack the loveliest flowers! It is always the pride of the forest those horrible brown larvæ gnaw with a voracity like that of death. I know already by experi-

ence that an invisible and jealous power undermines all perfect felicity. How many times you have told me so! You were a prophet.

Yesterday, when I went to see if my last fancies and ideas had been thoroughly understood and carried out, tears came into my eyes at such perfection, and I wrote at the foot of the architect's account (to his great surprise) "Correct; pay at once."

"But your man of business will not pay it in that way, madame," he said. "It is a matter of three hundred thousand francs."

So I added the words "without discussion," like a true Chaulieu of the seventeenth century.

"But, monsieur," I said, "I make one condition; do not speak of these buildings or of the park to any one. No one knows me here, even by name, and I put you on your honor to observe my wishes in this respect."

Now you understand the meaning of all my sudden movements, and my secret comings and goings. You see now where my beautiful things that rumor told you were sold have gone. Will you admit the lofty reason of this change in my life? Dear, to love is a great business, and whoso would love well must have no other. I have simplified all others; money can never be a care to me now. I have made life easy; I have so arranged my household once for all that I shall have no care except perhaps for ten minutes every morning

with my major-domo, old Philippe. I have studied life and its dangerous whirlpools; death taught me one fatal day a cruel lesson, and I mean to profit by it. My sole occupation shall be to please *him*, to love *him*, and to put variety into what might seem a monotonous existence to common souls.

Gaston knows nothing of all this as yet. At my request he has made himself (and so have I) a resident of Ville d'Avray. To-morrow we start for the Chalet. Our life there will not be costly; though, if I were to tell you the sum at which I estimate my toilet you would say, and not without reason, "She is mad!" I wish to adorn myself for him, every day, as other women adorn themselves for society. My toilet in this country solitude will therefore cost, for the whole year, twenty-four thousand francs. *He* may wear blouses if he likes. Don't think I mean to make this life a duel, and to exhaust myself in efforts and contrivances to retain love; no, but I will not leave anything unguarded for which I could blame myself, that is all. I have thirteen years still before me in which to be a pretty woman; I wish to be loved to the last day of the thirteenth year even more than I shall be on the morrow of my mysterious marriage. *This time* I will be humble, grateful; no caustic word shall escape me; I will make myself a servant, — for power and command it was that ruined me that first time.

Oh, Renée! if, like me, Gaston has understood the infinitude of love I am certain of living ever happy. Nature is so lovely around the Chalet; the woods are ravishing. At every turn a dewy landscape, or woodland scenes which refresh the soul with their sweet ideas. These woods are full of love. God grant I may not have made myself a pyre with them! To-morrow I shall be Madame Gaston. I ask my soul if it is Christian to love a man so much.

"It is legal," said my notary (who is to be my witness to-morrow) referring to the liquidation of my property; and then he added: "But I lose a client." And you, my beautiful Renée, — I dare not still say my dearest, — you may well say: "I lose a sister."

Address your letters in future to "Madame Gaston, poste restante, Versailles." We shall send there for our letters every day; and all our provisions are to come from Paris; so I hope we shall be able to live in absolute retirement. During the year the place has been preparing no one has set foot there; the purchase was made during the public excitement which followed the revolution of July, and it thus escaped notice.

Adieu. In writing that word I have as much pain as I have pleasure in my heart; does not that mean that I regret you as profoundly as I love Gaston?

XLIX.

M. MARIE GASTON TO M. DANIEL D'ARTHÈZ.

October, 1833.

My dear Daniel, — I want two witnesses for my marriage, and I beg you to come to me to-morrow evening and bring with you our friend, the good and great Joseph Bridau. The intention of the lady who will be my wife is to live remote from society, in perfect solitude; in this she has foreseen my most ardent wishes. You have known nothing of my love, — you who softened the woes of my poverty-stricken life, — but I know you will feel that this secrecy must have been a necessity. This is why, for the last year, you have seen me so seldom. After my marriage we shall be separated for a long time. Daniel, you have a soul able to understand me; friendship cannot exist without the friend. Perhaps I shall sometimes feel the need of you, but I cannot see you, in my own house at least. In this respect *She* has gone even beyond my desires. She has sacrificed to me and to our solitude the friend of her childhood, who has been a true sister to her; in return I immolate my friend.

All this will make you perceive, not a passion, but a true love, — complete, divine, founded on an intimate knowledge between two beings who link themselves

together. My happiness is pure, and it is infinite; but as some secret law forbids us to enjoy unmingled happiness, there lurks in the depths of my heart a thought which troubles me alone, for she knows nothing of it. You know the dreadful situation I was once in, for you have often helped me in it. Where and how did I get courage to live when hope was overthrown so often? From your past life, my friend, — from you, in whom I found such true consolation, such delicate relief. But now, *She* has paid my crushing debts. She is rich, and I have nothing. How often have I said in my lazy moments, "Ah! if any rich woman would only take a fancy to me!" Well, in presence of that accomplished fact, the heedless jest of the boy, the actual scheme of many an unscrupulous pauper, takes another aspect; I am humiliated in spite of the nobility of her soul — of which I am sure. Moreover, she has seen that I did not recoil from that abasement. A point is reached where, instead of being a protector, I am the protected one.

I confide that suffering to you, my dear Daniel, but outside of that point, let me hasten to say, all things are far beyond my dreams. I have found the Beautiful without a flaw, the Good without defect. As the saying is, the bride is too enchanting; she has intelligence in her tenderness, and the charm and grace which give variety to love; she is educated and under-

stands all topics; she is pretty, fair, and lithe, but plump as well; one might say that Raffaelle and Rubens had conspired to produce such a woman. I don't know if it would have been possible for me to love a dark woman as much as a fair one; for dark women always seem to me half boys. She is a widow, and has no children. Though eager, alert, and indefatigable, she nevertheless finds pleasure in melancholy meditations. These diverse gifts do not exclude in her either dignity or nobility of manner; she is imposing. Though she belongs to one of the oldest of our noble families, she loves me enough to overlook the misfortunes of my birth.

Our secret love has lasted long; we have tested one-another thoroughly; we are each jealous; our thoughts are like two flashes from one thunderclap; we both love for the first time; and this delicious spring-time holds in its joys all that imagination can conceive of happiness. Each day is full to overflowing, and when we part we write poems to each other. I have never once thought of tarnishing this beautiful season of our love with desires, though my soul is filled with them. She was a widow and free, and she has thoroughly understood the flattery of this restraint; she is sometimes touched to tears. You will see in her to-morrow, my dear Daniel, a really superior being. Not a kiss of love has there been between us; we have mutually been in awe of one another.

"We have each," she said to me, "a grievous thing in our lives to overlook."

"I do not see yours."

"My marriage," she answered.

You, who are a great man, and who love one of the most distinguished women in that aristocratic world in which I found my Armande, will comprehend that speech; it will suffice you to understand her soul, and what will be the happiness of

Your friend,

MARIE GASTON.

L.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME GASTON.

OH, Louise, can it be that after all your experience of the misfortunes of exclusive love, you mean to bury yourself with a husband in solitude? After declaring that you killed one by exactions in the world, do you really mean to live apart from the world to devour another? What griefs you are preparing for yourself! But from the way you have set about the matter I see it is irrevocable. A man who has made you overcome your aversion to second marriages must be angelic in mind and divine in heart; and I ought, therefore, not to meddle with your illusions. You are happy in your belief in happiness, and I have not the heart to blame

you, though the instinct of my tenderness would have made me try to turn you from this marriage, had I known of it in time. Yes, a hundred times yes, nature and society combine to destroy the existence of unalloyed happiness; because such happiness runs counter to nature and society, — perhaps, too, heaven is jealous of its rights. At any rate, if you persist in burying yourself with your love, and living exclusively for that, my friendship foresees some misfortune, the nature of which I am unable to prophesy, not knowing whence it may come nor what will give birth to it. Besides, dearest, I am sure so vast and boundless a happiness will be too much for you to bear indefinitely; excessive joy is even more exhausting than the heaviest burden. I don't say anything against *him;* you love him, and that's enough; but I do hope you will write to me, some day when you have nothing to do, and give me a full description of this beautiful and rare "animal."

You see I take the matter gayly; the fact is, I feel certain that when the honeymoon is well over you will both with one accord settle down, and do as other people do. Some day, say two years hence, when you and I are driving together on the road to Versailles, you will say to me: "There's the chalet I said I would never leave!" and then you'll laugh your own good laugh, and show all your pretty teeth.

I have not told Louis as yet; and I shall not tell him

all, for I am afraid it would make him laugh. I shall simply tell him of your marriage and your wish to keep it secret for the present. Here it is October; you are a brave woman to face the winter in the country; if it did not concern marriage I should say you were taking the bull by the horns. Rest assured that you have in me a friend who will be both discreet and intelligent. The mysterious centre of Africa has swallowed up many a traveller, and it seems to me that, in the matter of sentiment, you are rushing into a journey like that of so many explorers who have lost their lives either through the natives or the burning sands. Happily, your Africa is only six miles from Paris, so I gayly say to you: "Bon voyage! we shall see you back soon."

LI.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME GASTON.

PARIS, 1835.

WHAT has become of you, dear Louise? After a silence of two years surely your Renée has a right to make inquiries. Is this love? Does it necessitate the annulling of a friendship like ours? Admit that if I adore my children even more than you love your Gaston, there is in that maternal sentiment a breadth and grandeur

which does not allow of depriving other affections of their due, but, on the contrary, leaves a woman free to be a sincere and devoted friend. Your letters, your dear sweet face, are sorely lacking to me. I am reduced to conjectures about you. Oh, Louise!

As for ourselves, I will run over our events as succinctly as possible.

In re-reading your last letter but one I was struck with a few sharp words about our political position. You twitted us with having kept the presidency of the Cour des Comptes, which, as you observed, we hold, together with the title of count, through the favor of Charles X. But if we had only our patrimonial income to depend upon how could I, with only forty thousand francs a year (thirty of which are entailed with the property), — how could I establish Athénaïs and my poor little "pauper" René? Ought we not to live on the salary of the post, and lay by the income from the estate? In twenty years we can amass nearly six hundred thousand francs, which will serve to dower my daughter and provide for René, whom I mean to put into the navy. The little pauper will thus have ten thousand francs a year, and possibly we might be able to leave him a sum in hand equal to his sister's portion. When he is a post-captain he will be able to marry a rich girl and perhaps hold as good a position in the world as his elder brother.

These sage calculations made us resolve in our own minds to accept the new order of things. Naturally, the new dynasty in return made Louis a peer of France and a grand officer of the Legion of honor. As soon as l'Estorade took the oaths, he could not, and ought not to do the thing by halves; from that time therefore he has rendered great services in the Chamber. He has now reached a position in which he can tranquilly remain to the end of his days. He has dexterity in public business; he is more of a debater than an orator, but that is all that is needed of him. His shrewdness, and his sound knowledge, both in questions of government policy and in matters of administration, are appreciated, and all parties now regard him as an indispensable man. I may tell you privately that an embassy was lately offered to him; but I made him decline it. The education of Armand, who is now thirteen, and Athénaïs, who is nearly eleven, keeps me in Paris, and I want to stay here till my little René has finished his, which is only beginning.

To continue faithful to the Elder Branch and live on the estate would not have enabled me to educate my children and provide for the two youngest. A mother, my dearest, can't be a Decius, — especially in times when Deciuses are rare. Fifteen years from now l'Estorade can retire to La Crampade with a handsome pension, after installing Armand as referendary in the Cour des

Comptes. As for René, the navy will no doubt lead him into diplomacy; at seven years old the little monkey is as shrewd as an old cardinal.

Ah! Louise, I am a very happy mother. My children continue to give me joys without a cloud, — *Senza brama, sicura ricchezza.* Armand is in the Collège Henri IV. I decided on public education without being able to bring myself to a total separation from him; I did therefore as the Duc d'Orléans did before becoming — possibly in order to be — Louis Philippe. Every morning Lucas (the old servant, whom you will remember) takes Armand to school, and fetches him at half-past four in the afternoon. An old and excellent tutor who lives in our house makes him learn his lessons at night, and wakes him in the morning in time for school. Lucas takes him his lunch during the recreation. Thus I see him at dinner, and in the evening before he goes to bed, and I always see him off in the morning. He is the same charming child, full of heart and devotion, whom you loved; his tutor is satisfied with him. I have my Naïs and the little one with me; they keep up an incessant buzzing, but I am just as much of a child as they. I could not force myself to give up my dear children's presence and caresses. I can now rush to Armand's bed, if I so please, and look at him as he sleeps; and, to tell the truth, to take and give a kiss to that angel is a necessity of my existence.

Still, the system of keeping children at home has its disadvantages; I fully recognize them. Society, like nature, is jealous, and will not allow her laws to be infringed upon; she does not choose to have her system of economy upset. Therefore, in those families where children are kept at home they are too early exposed to the fire of the world, they see its passions and its dissimulations. Incapable of even guessing the distinctions which guide the conduct of grown persons, they subject life to their feelings and passions, instead of subjecting their desires and requirements to the world. Children are soon taken by false brilliancy, which shines very much more in society than solid virtues; for it is *appearances*, above all, which society brings to the front, and clothes in lying garments. When a lad of fifteen assumes the assurance of a man who knows the world, he is a monstrosity; he is an old man at twenty-five, and renders himself by that precocious knowledge incapable of the solid studies on which real and serious talents rest. The world is a great comedian, and, like a comedian, it receives and returns all; it keeps nothing. A mother therefore *must*, if she keeps her children at home, make a firm resolution not to allow them to enter the world; she must have the courage to oppose their desires, and her own, in this matter. Cornelia kept her jewels in their casket; and so shall I, for my children are my life.

I am thirty years old, and the heat of the day is over, the hardest part of the journey done. In a few years I shall be an old woman, and I shall find immense strength in the feeling of having done my duty. One would really think my three dear beings understood this thought of mine and conformed to it. There exist between them (who have never left my side) and me mysterious relations. They shower enjoyments upon me as if they knew all that they owe me in the way of compensation.

Armand, who for the first three years of his studies, was heavy, meditative, and caused me some anxiety, suddenly took a start. No doubt he began to perceive the object of preparatory studies, which children do not always see, and which is, in fact, to train them to study, to sharpen their intelligence, and mould them to obedience, — the mainspring of society. My dear, a few days ago I had the intoxicating sensation of seeing Armand before a great audience at the Sorbonne. At the distribution of prizes at the Collège Henri IV. he obtained two first prizes, that for verses and that for theme. I turned white when I heard his name called, and I longed to cry out, "I am his mother!" Naïs squeezed my hand till she hurt me, if indeed I could feel anything at such a moment. Ah! Louise, that grand day was better than all the lost loves in the world.

The triumphs of his brother have spurred on my little René, who wants to go to school like his elder. Sometimes the three children shout and rush about the house and make a racket fit to split one's head. I am sure I don't know how I bear it, for I am always there. I have never left to any one, not even to Mary, the responsibility of watching over them. But there are so many joys to garner in this dear business of motherhood! To see a child leave its play just to run up and kiss you, as if driven by a need — oh! what joy! We can observe them best in their freest moments, for one of a mother's chief duties is to distinguish from the earliest years the aptitudes and character and vocation of her children. All children brought up by their mothers have a knowledge of customs and ways of life which serves as a substitute for natural intelligence, whereas natural intelligence never takes the place of what men learn from their mothers. I recognize these shades of difference in the men I meet in salons, where I can detect instantly the traces of a woman in the manners of a young man. How therefore can women deprive their sons of such an advantage? So, you see, my duties, if accomplished, are fruitful of treasures and joys.

Armand, I am convinced, will make an honest and upright public man, the most conscientious deputy that could be found anywhere; whereas my René will

be the boldest, most adventurous, and at the same time the wiliest of sailors. The little scamp has an iron will; he gets everything he wants, and he makes a thousand twists and turns to reach his end; if a thousand won't do it he invents a thousand and one, or more, until he does reach it. Where my dear Armand would resign himself calmly and see the reason of things, René storms, strives, plans, — haranguing all the time, — and ends by finding a crack of vantage; if he can get but the point of his knife into it he presently drives through in his little chariot.

As for Naïs, she is so much myself that I hardly distinguish her flesh from mine. Ah! the darling! the dear little girl! whom I love to make dainty and sweet; whose hair I braid, in whose curls I put my thoughts of love. I want her to be happy; I will give her to no man whom she does not love and who will not love her. But — oh, my God! sometimes when I am decking my darling with ribbons in her hair, or tying the shoes on her dainty little feet, a thought darts into my heart and head which turns me faint. Who is mistress of the fate of a daughter? Perhaps she will love a man unworthy of her; perhaps she will not be loved by him she loves. Often when I am watching her the tears come into my eyes. To part with a charming creature, a flower, a rose which has lived in our bosom like a bud on a rose-bush, and give her to a

man who deprives us of all! It is thinking of you, you who for two years have not written me even the three words "I am happy," which has brought into my mind the drama of marriage, dreadful to every mother who is a mother indeed.

Adieu! I don't know why I write to you, for you don't deserve my friendship. Oh, answer me, my own Louise!

LII.

MADAME GASTON TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

The Chalet.

A silence of two years excites your curiosity, and you want to know why I have not written; but, my dear Renée, there are no words nor signs nor language in which to express my happiness; our souls have the strength to sustain it, — there, in two words, is all I can tell you.

We have made not the slightest effort to be happy. We understand each other in all things; in two years there has never been a jarring note in our concert, not a discord in our feelings, not the faintest difference in our wills. In short, my dearest, there is no day which does not bring its own especial fruit, no moment that fancy does not render delightful. Not only are we sure that our life can never be monotonous, but we fear

sometimes it cannot be long enough for all the poesies of our love, which is fruitful as Nature, and as varied as she.

No, we have not found a single disappointment! We please each other better, far better, than at first, and we hourly discover new reasons to love one another. Often we say to ourselves in the evening, as we are walking after dinner by our pond, that the next day we will surely go to Paris out of mere curiosity, as sight-seers, — very much as one might say: "Let us go to Switzerland."

"Ah, yes," Gaston says, "they tell me there 's a new boulevard; the Madeleine is finished; we really ought to go and see all that."

Bah! the next day we stay in bed, and breakfast in our room. Mid-day comes; the weather is warm, too warm to make an effort. He asks me to let him look at me, and he does, as if I were a picture; he buries himself in the contemplation, which, as you may fancy, is reciprocal. The tears come into our eyes; we think of our happiness, and tremble. I am always his mistress; that is to say, I seem to love him less than he loves me. That deception is delicious. There is such charm for women in seeing sentiment greater than desire, in seeing our master stop there where we wish him to remain.

You asked me to tell you what Gaston is like.

But, dear Renée, it is impossible to make a portrait of the man we love; we cannot be truthful. Besides, between ourselves, there is a singular and sad result of our manners and customs, — namely: nothing is so different as a man in society and the man who loves; the difference is so great that they do not resemble each other in any particular. He who takes the graceful attitudes of a graceful dancer to whisper in our ear at the corner of a fireplace some word of love may not have any of love's true graces such as women desire them. On the other hand, a man who seems ugly, without manners, and ill-dressed in his black cloth, may hide a lover who possesses the very spirit of love, and who will never be ridiculous in any of those positions where we ourselves, with our external airs and graces, may sometimes fail. To find in a man a mysterious harmony between what he seems to be and what he is; to meet with one who in the privacy of married life has that innate grace which cannot be acquired, — the grace that antique sculpture has displayed in the chastity of its statues, the innocence of abandonment to Nature that the ancients have put into those poems which, even in the nude, seem to our souls to be clothed with garments, — all this ideal, which springs from ourselves and belongs to the world of harmonies, and is no doubt the essence of all things, the vast problem which the imagination of all women is incessantly seeking, — well,

Gaston is the living solution of it. Ah! dearest, I never knew till now what love and youth and intellect and beauty, all united, were.

My Gaston is never affected; his grace is instinctive, it develops without effort. When we walk in the woods, his arm about my waist, mine on his shoulder, side to side, our heads touching, we move with even step and a motion so soft and uniform, that any one who saw us pass might think we were one being gliding along the paths like the Immortals of Homer. This harmony is in desire, thought, and word. Sometimes beneath the foliage still damp from a passing shower, when the grass is lustrous with the rain-drops, we have taken long walks without uttering a word, listening to the plash of water, delighting in the ruddy color which the setting sun spreads upon the tree-tops or dashes upon their old gray trunks. Surely, then our thoughts were a prayer, secret and confused, rising to heaven as an excuse for happiness. Sometimes we exclaim together at the same instant, when a sudden turn of the path shows us, afar, some delicious vista. If you knew what there is of honey and of depth in a kiss, almost a timid one, amid that holy nature! It makes one think that God made us to pray thus to him. Then we go home, loving each other better, always better. Such a love between husband and wife would seem insulting to the world of Paris; we can only indulge it, like lovers, buried in our woods.

Gaston, my dear, is of middle height, which is that of all men of energy; he is neither stout nor thin, and is very well-made; his limbs are well-rounded; he is active in his movements, he jumps a ditch with the spring of a wild animal. In any position, no matter what it is, he has an instinct in him by which he finds his equilibrium, — which is rare in men who have the habit of meditating. Though dark, as distinguished from fair, his skin is extremely white. His hair is black as jet, and produces a vigorous contrast with the dead-white tones of his throat and forehead. He has the melancholy head of Louis XIII. His moustache and *royale* are black; I have made him cut off his whiskers and beard, they have become so common. His sacred poverty kept him pure from all the stains that degrade young men. His teeth are magnificent; his health perfect. The glance of his blue eye, to me of magnetic tenderness, takes fire and gleams like a flame when his soul is troubled. Like all strong men with powerful intellects he possesses an equability of character which would surprise you as much as it surprised me.

Many women have told me of their home trials, — the instability of will and restlessness of men who are discontented with themselves; who either will not or do not know how to grow old; whose wasted youth has left them eternal regrets; whose veins are poisoned;

whose eyes have a lurking sadness; who harass others to hide their own distrusts; who avenge themselves on their wives because they cannot be agreeable themselves, and who secretly hate our merits as a reproach to their own defects, — all these trials youth knows nothing of; they are the attributes of ill-proportioned marriages.

Oh, my dear Renée, marry Athénaïs to none but a young man. If you knew how I feast on that constant smile, which is ever varied by a refined and delicate mind, — a smile which *speaks*, telling of thoughts of love and mute acknowledgment; binding past joys ever to present ones. Nothing is forgotten between us. We make the smallest things in Nature the sharers of our happiness; they are all living, they have a voice in the depths of our woods. An old mossy oak, near the keeper's house, tells us how we sat there, tired, under its shade, and Gaston explained to me the nature of mosses and told me their history, until, from fact to fact and science to science our thought rose to the ends of life. Our two minds have something so fraternal in them that I often think they are two copies of the same book. You see, I am making myself literary! We both have the habit of following out a thing to its fullest extent, of trying to perceive all there is to it, and the proofs that we constantly give ourselves of the integrity of this inner sense is a pleas-

ure that is ever new. We have come to regard this accordance of mind as an evidence of love; if it were ever to fail, the disaster would be to us what an infidelity is in other homes.

My life, full of pleasures, may nevertheless seem to you very laborious; for I must tell you, dear, that Louise-Armande-Marie de Chaulieu takes care of her own room; my religion enters into the smallest things appertaining to its worship. I do my room with all the care a girl in love will spend upon her own adornment. I 'm as fussy as an old maid. My dressing-room, instead of being chaos, is a delightful boudoir. The master, the sovereign, may enter at all hours and his eye will encounter nothing to afflict or surprise or disenchant him; flowers, perfume, elegance, all, can only charm. In the early morning, at daybreak, while he is still asleep, I go into a little dressing-room, where — wise with the experience of my mother — I remove all traces of sleep with a bath of cold water. The pores of the skin don't do their duty during sleep, the skin gets heated and clogged, and you see a sort of atmosphere upon it. But out of a sponge-bath a woman emerges like a young girl. Perhaps that explains the myth of Venus rising from the sea; I know that water gives me the sparkling freshness of the Aurora. I comb and perfume my hair; and after this minute and private toilet I slip back and appear to the master like a

spring morning. He is charmed with the freshness of the flower, though he cannot explain it. Later, my toilet for the day concerns my maid and takes place in the larger dressing-room. Thus I actually make three toilets, sometimes four, a day for Monsieur my husband.

But we have some work to do, nevertheless. We take a deep interest in our flowers, those beautiful creatures of our conservatory, and in our trees. We have made ourselves seriously botanists, and we love our flowers passionately; the Chalet is filled with them. Our lawns are always green, our groups of trees and shrubs are as carefully tended as those of the richest banker. Nothing can be more beautiful than the grounds about the house. We are extremely fastidious about our fruit, and we keep incessant watch over our hot-beds, and Montreuil peaches, our walled fruit, and our standard pears. But in case these rural occupations should not be satisfying enough for the mind of my adored, of which I have had my doubts, I advised him to finish in this perfect quiet and solitude certain plays which he began in the days of his poverty, and which are really very fine.

That sort of work is the only one in literature which can be taken up, laid aside, and returned to; it requires long reflection and does not demand the same perpetual chiselling as to style. No one can write dialogue con-

secutively. Long pauses are needed; clever strokes must be thought of, situations arranged, climaxes found, and also witty sayings, — which are only produced by the mind as the plant gives its flowers, and are, moreover, found more readily by waiting till they come to you than by search. This pursuit of ideas pleases me extremely. I have made myself Gaston's collaborator, and I never leave him now, not even when he soars away into vast regions of imagination.

Now you know how I spend my winter evenings. Our household moves so easily that we have never since our marriage had a word of reproach, not even a correction to make to our servants; they are happy and they see that their condition will not be changed except by their own fault. We allow the gardeners to sell the surplus of the fruit and vegetables. The dairy-woman does the same with the milk and cream and fresh butter. Only, of course, the best products are reserved for us. The servants are pleased with their profits, and we are enchanted with this profusion, which no fortune can procure in that dreadful Paris, where fine peaches cost, each, the revenue of a hundred francs.

All this, my dear, has a meaning. I assume to be the world to my husband; now, the world is amusing; my husband must not, therefore, be allowed to be bored in this solitude. I thought I was jealous when I was loved and allowed myself to be loved; but I know now

what the jealousy of a woman who loves really is, — that is, real jealousy. It has come to this, that if a single glance of his seems indifferent I tremble. Sometimes I say to myself, "What if he ceased to love me?" — and I shudder. Oh! I am before him as the soul of a Christian is before God.

Alas! my Renée, I still have no children. The moment will doubtless come when the feelings of a father and mother will be needed to keep us in love with this retreat; we shall both desire the little brown or blond heads, the little frocks, the pelerines skipping and running along our flowery paths and among the copses. Oh! it is unnatural, abnormal, that flowers should have no fruits! The recollection of your beautiful family assails me poignantly at times. My life — mine! — has narrowed, while yours has expanded, has shone out. Love is profoundly selfish, whereas motherhood tends to multiply all feelings. I deeply felt this difference between us when I read your good, your tender letter. Your happiness fills me with envy when I think of you living in those three hearts.

Yes! you are happy; you have wisely conformed to the laws of social life; whereas I am aloof from all. Nothing can ever console a woman for the loss of her beauty but loving and beloved children. I shall soon be thirty, and at that age a woman begins some terrible inward lamentations. I am still beautiful, but I see

the boundary of a woman's life; beyond it, what will become of me? When I am forty *he* will still be young, I shall be old. Whenever that thought enters my heart I lie at his feet and make him swear that when he feels his love diminishing he will tell me so — instantly. But he is only a child; he swears it in a tone as if his love could never diminish; and he is so beautiful that — oh, Renée, you understand? — I believe him!

Adieu, dear angel; will it again be years before we write to each other? Happiness is monotonous in its expression; perhaps it is because of that great difficulty that Dante seems to loving souls grander in the Paradiso than in the Inferno. I am not Dante, I am only your friend, and I do not want to tire you out. But you, — you must write to me, for you have in your children an ever-varying happiness and a growing one, whereas mine — but oh! why talk of it any more?

Adieu; I send you a thousand tender thoughts.

LIII.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME GASTON.

My dear Louise, — I have read and reread your letter and the more it penetrates my mind, the more I feel that you are less a woman than a child. You have

not changed ; you forget what I have told you a thousand times ; namely, that the passion of Love is a theft committed by the social state from the natural state ; it is so transient in nature that the resources of society cannot change its primitive condition. Therefore all noble souls have endeavored to dignify that passion, to make a man of that child ; but then Love becomes, you say, an anomaly.

Society desires to be fruitful. By substituting lasting sentiments for the transient joys of nature it has created the grandest of all human things,— the Family, eternal base of all society. To this it sacrifices the man as well as the woman ; for, let us not mislead ourselves, the father of a family gives his activity, his powers, all his fortunes to his wife. It is the wife who profits by these sacrifices. Luxury, wealth, are mostly for her ; for her the glory and elegance, the flower and sweetness of the home. Oh, my angel, you are once more taking life amiss. To be worshipped is the theory of the young girl, good for the spring-tide of life, but not that of the woman who is a wife and a mother.

Perhaps it is enough for a woman's self-love to know that she can make herself adored. If you wish to be a wife and a mother be satisfied with that knowledge and return to Paris. Let me tell you again and yet again that you will lose through happiness what others lose through unhappiness. Listen to me, my child ;

even if I could be loved by a man for whom I felt in me the love you feel for Gaston, I still would hold to my dear duty, to my sweet family. Motherhood is to the heart of a woman one of those simple, natural, fruitful, inexhaustible things that are like the very elements of life. I remember how one day, now fourteen years ago, I clasped self-devotion as a drowning man clings to the mast of his vessel, in despair; but to-day, when I evoke the memory of all my past before me, I choose once more that motive as the principle of my life; for it is the safest and the most fruitful of all. The knowledge of your life, which is based, oh! dear Louise, on a passionate egotism, has strengthened my resolution. I will never tell you all these things again; but I ought to tell them to you once more and for the last time because I see that you are putting your happiness to a most terrible trial.

I have reflected deeply over your life in the country, and another observation comes into my mind which I think I ought to tell you. Life is made up, both for heart and body, of certain regular movements. All excess brought into the mechanism is a cause of pleasure or of pain; now pleasure, or pain, is a fever of the soul which is essentially transient, because neither can be long borne. To make one's life an excess, is n't that making it a life of illness? You are *ill*, so long as you maintain at the level of passion an emotion which

ought to become in marriage a pure and equable power. Yes, my angel, to-day I know it, the glory of a home is in that calm existence, that deep and mutual comprehension, that communion of joys and trials for which it is sometimes laughed at. Oh! how grand was that saying of the Duchesse de Sully, the wife of the great Sully, when they told her that her husband, grave as he seemed, did not scruple to have a mistress: "That is explainable," she answered. "I am the honor of the house. I should be very sorry to play the part of a courtesan."

My Louise, you, who are more passionate than tender, you wish to be the wife and mistress too. With the soul of Héloïse and the senses of Saint Teresa, you give yourself wholly up to a disorder sanctioned by the laws; in other words, you deprave the institution of marriage. Yes, you, who judged me so severely when I seemed immoral in accepting from the day of my marriage the means of happiness within my reach, you deserve to-day the reproach you made me then. You want to bend nature and society to the service of your passion. You remain what you were; you are not transforming yourself into what a woman should be. You are retaining the wishes and the will and exactions of a young girl. I might call your passion calculating. Are you not selling your adornments for a price? Behind all those preparations and

precautions, I think I see you are distrustful. Oh! dear Louise, if you did but know the sweetness of the labor women do in making themselves good and tender to their family. The independence of my character took its rise in that early sadness which maternal pleasures dissipated, and now the joys of family are my recompense. If the morning was difficult, the evening will be pure and serene. I fear it may be otherwise with your life. As I finished reading your letter I prayed to God to convert you to the family; to make you taste those joys, unspeakable, constant, eternal, because they are true and simple and in our nature.

But alas! what can my reasoning do against an evil which makes you happy? The tears are in my eyes as I write these words. I did really and truly believe that a few months given to this passionate conjugal love would bring you back to a reasonable sense of things, through exhaustion of the sentiment; but I see you are insatiable, — after killing a lover you will now kill love. Adieu, dear misguided one; I despair of helping you, since the letter in which I strove so hard to bring you to the true life of woman in the social sphere, by a picture of my happiness, has only served to glorify the egotism of your existence. Yes, there is nought but yourself in your love, and you love Gaston far more for yourself than for him.

LIV.

MADAME GASTON TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

May 20.

Renée! the blow has come — no, it has fallen upon your poor Louise with the rapidity of a thunderbolt. For me, you know well, that blow is doubt. Conviction would be death.

Two days ago, after my morning toilet, I looked everywhere for Gaston to take a little walk before breakfast. I could not find him. At last I went to the stable, and there I saw his mare covered with sweat; the groom was scraping off the clots of foam with a knife before rubbing her down.

"Who has put Fedelta in such a state?" I asked.

"Monsieur," replied the boy.

I saw the mud of Paris, which is not the least like country mud on the mare's legs. "He has been to Paris!" I thought. That thought brought a thousand others rushing into my heart, and all my blood flew there. To go to Paris without telling me, at the very hour when I always left him alone; to rush there and get back with such rapidity that Fedelta was almost foundered! Suspicion tightened its awful belt around me so that I could scarcely breathe. I walked a few

yards away, and sat down on a bench to try and recover my self-possession.

Gaston found me thus, livid, and doubtless alarming; for he cried out, "What is the matter?" so hurriedly, and in a tone of voice of such anxiety, that I rose and took his arm. But my knees gave way under me, and I was compelled to sit down again. Then he took me in his arms and carried me into the parlor, for we were close to the house, and there the terrified servants followed us. But Gaston sent them all away with a motion of his hand. When we were alone I was able to rise, and, without saying a word, I went to my chamber, where I locked myself in to weep at my ease. Gaston stood at the door two hours listening to my sobs, and asking his poor creature questions with the patience of an angel; but I did not answer them. All I said was: —

"I will see you when my eyes are less red and my voice does not tremble."

He darted out of the house. I bathed my eyes in cold water, and my face; then after a time I opened the door and found him outside, although I had not heard his step in returning.

"What is the matter?" he asked again.

"Nothing," I said; "I saw the mud of Paris on Fedelta's legs; and I could not understand why you went there without telling me; but you are free."

"Your punishment for your doubts shall be," he said, "to wait until to-morrow for an explanation."

"Look me in the eyes," I said. I plunged mine into his; the infinite penetrated the infinite. No, I did not see that cloud which infidelity brings into the soul, and which must inevitably dim the clearness of the pupils.

I pretended to be satisfied; but I was not. Men know, as we do, how to lie and to deceive.

Since then we have not been parted for a moment. Oh, dearest, as I look at him I feel myself indissolubly bound to him. An inward trembling shakes me when he returns into the room after leaving me for a moment. My life is in him and not in myself. I am giving cruel denials to your cruel letter. Never did I feel this dependence on the being of another with my sacred Spaniard, to whom I was what this cruel child now is to me. How I hate that mare! How foolish I have been to keep horses at all! But alas! I should have to cut off Gaston's feet or lock him into the Chalet. Such stupid thoughts as these fill my mind; you can therefore judge how beside myself I am. If love is not cage enough no power can keep a man who wearies of his life.

"Do I weary you?" I said to him plainly.

"How you torment yourself about nothing," he answered, with his eyes full of tender pity; "I have never loved you as I do now."

"If that is true," I replied, "let me sell Fedelta."

"Sell her," he said.

The words crushed me; Gaston seemed to say, "You are the rich one; I have nothing; my will does not exist." If he did not think that, I believed he thought it; and again I left him and went to bed, for it was late at night.

Oh! Renée, in solitude a heart-rending thought may lead to suicide. These delicious gardens, that starry night, the cool breeze wafting me the incense of our flowers, our valley, our woodland heights — all, all seemed to me gloomy, black, a desert! I was, as it were, at the foot of a precipice, among serpents and poisonous plants; I could see no God in Heaven. After such a night a woman is old.

"Take Fedelta and ride to Paris," I said to him the next morning, "We will not sell her; I love her, for she carries you."

He was not deceived; there was anger in my voice, though I tried to conceal it.

"Have confidence in me," he answered, holding out his hand with so noble an action and giving me at the same time so noble a look that I felt myself abased.

"How petty I am!" I cried.

"No," he said, "you love me, that is all;" and he pressed me to him.

"Go to Paris without me," I said, in order to make him feel I gave up all suspicion.

He went; I thought he would have stayed! I can never tell you what I suffered. There was in me another myself who I did not know existed. These scenes, my dearest, have a tragic solemnity for a woman who loves, which cannot be expressed in words. The whole of life seems to be in that passing moment; the eye sees no other horizon; a mere nothing is all, a glance is a book, words are ice, in a motion of the lips we read our death. I expected a return; for my own act was noble and grand.

I ran to the roof of the Chalet to follow him with my eyes along the road. Ah! my dear Renée, I saw him disappear with frightful rapidity.

"How he rides!" I thought, involuntarily.

Once more alone, I fell back into the hell of suspicion, into the tumult of conjecture. At times the certainty of betrayal seemed to me a balm compared to the agony of doubt. Doubt is our duel with ourselves, and we give ourselves fearful wounds. I walked about, I roamed the paths, I returned to the Chalet; then I started again like a mad-woman.

Gaston left me at seven in the morning and he did not return till eleven. Now as it takes but half an hour to reach Paris by the park of Saint-Cloud and the Bois de Boulogne, it is plain that he must have been three hours in the city.

He came in gayly, bringing me a riding-whip made of india-rubber and mounted with a gold handle. For the last two weeks I had been without a whip, mine being old and broken.

"So this is why you have tortured me?" I said, admiring the workmanship of the handle, in which there was a vinaigrette.

I fully understood that the gift concealed some new deception; but nevertheless I threw myself on his breast and made him tender reproaches for letting me torment myself for such a trifle. He thought he had done a clever thing. I saw in his whole manner, in his eye, the sort of inward satisfaction men feel when they have succeeded in deceiving others; a gleam seems to escape their soul, a flash from their mind is reflected on their features, and shaken from them with the movements of the body. While admiring the pretty thing I asked him suddenly, at a moment when we were looking at each other face to face: —

"Who designed this work of art for you?"

"An artist, a friend of mine."

"Ah! — and Verdier mounted it," I added, reading the name of the jeweller, which was engraved on the whip.

Gaston is nothing but a child, and he blushed. I rewarded him with caresses for being ashamed of deceiving me. I played the innocent; and he thought the whole affair had blown over.

May 25th.

The next morning by six I was in my riding-habit, and I reached Verdier's at seven, where I saw several whips of the same pattern as mine. A clerk recognized mine when I showed it to him.

"We sold it yesterday to a gentleman," he said, describing Gaston exactly.

I could have no doubt that it was he. I will not tell you how my heart throbbed in going to Paris and during this little scene. When Gaston woke at eight o'clock he found me fresh and dainty in my morning dress, walking about among my flowers with deceitful indifference; I was certain that nothing had betrayed my absence, for no one knew of it but my old Philippe.

"Gaston," I said, as we walked round the pond, "I know perfectly well the difference there is between a work of art, unique in itself, which would have taken time to design for a friend, and one which has been cast in a mould."

Gaston turned pale and gazed at me as I drew forth the accusing gift.

"My friend," I said, "this is not a whip; it is a screen behind which you hide a secret."

Thereupon, my dear, I gave myself the atrocious pleasure of getting him involved in a labyrinth of lies and deceptions from which he could not escape, though he displayed an amazing cleverness in trying to find a

wall to scale. He was compelled, however, to stand his ground before an adversary who consented after a time to let him think he had convinced her. But this compliance came too late, as it always does in such scenes. I had committed the fault against which my mother had tried to warn me. By laying bare my jealousy I had as good as declared war and its stratagems against Gaston. My dear, jealousy is essentially stupid and blundering.

So then I vowed to myself to suffer in silence, to watch everything, to obtain certainty, and if my suspicions were confirmed, either to make an end of everything between me and Gaston, or consent to my misfortune; there is no other course of conduct for women brought up as we have been.

What is he hiding from me? for he *is* hiding something. The secret must concern some woman. Is it some youthful affair for which he blushes? What is it? Ah, Renée, that *What* is engraved in four letters of fire upon everything. I read that fatal word on the mirror of my pond, among my trees, in the clouds of the sky, on the ceilings, at our meals, in the very flowers of my carpet. When I sleep a voice cries to me, "*What?*"

Since that day there has been in our life a torturing interest; I have the bitterest, the most acrid thoughts that ever corroded a woman's heart — to belong to a

man whom we believe to be unfaithful! Oh, dearest, my present life is hell and heaven both. I have never before set foot in this fiery furnace — I, until now so sacredly adored.

June.

Since the day of which I wrote last, Gaston, instead of working lazily, with the ease of a rich artist who pets his work, sets himself tasks to accomplish, like a writer who lives by his pen. He employs four hours every day in actual toil and has finished two of his plays.

"He wants money!"

That thought is whispered to me by an inward voice. He spends almost nothing. We live in such absolute confidence that there is not a corner in his study that my eyes and my fingers have not penetrated. His expenditures have never reached two thousand francs a year, and I knew that he had thirty thousand francs, not so much laid by, as simply placed in a drawer in his room. You will know what I did. I rose in the night and went, while he slept, to see if the money were still there. The chill of death seized me when I found it gone!

That same week I discovered that he goes to Sèvres for his letters, and he must destroy them as soon as read, for although I am as inventive as Figaro, I have never yet found a trace of them. Alas! my Renée, in

spite of all the fine vows I made to myself apropos of the riding-whip, an impulse of my soul, which I must call madness, drove me into following Gaston one day in one of his rapid rides to the post-office. He was terrified when I found him on horseback paying the postage on a letter he held in his hand. After looking at me fixedly for a moment, he put Fedelta to a gallop and rode home so rapidly that I was utterly exhausted on reaching the gate, though I hardly felt the bodily fatigue, my soul was so tortured.

Once there, Gaston said nothing; he rang and waited, but did not speak to me. I was more dead than alive. Either I was right, or I was wrong, but in either case my spying was unworthy of Armande-Louise-Marie de Chaulieu. I had rolled in the social gutter below even a grisette, side-by-side with courtesans, actresses, creatures without education. What sufferings!

At last the gate opened; he gave his horse to a groom, and I dismounted — but into his arms; he held them out to me. I took up my riding-habit on my left arm, and gave him my right; we walked on — still silent. The hundred steps we made may be counted for me as a hundred years of purgatory. At each step a thousand thoughts, almost visible, hovered in tongues of flame before my eyes, and darted into my soul, with each a fang, a different venom! When the groom

and the horses were out of sight, I stopped Gaston; I looked at him, and said, pointing to the letter which he still held unopened in his right hand: —

"Let me read it?"

He gave it to me; I unsealed it, and read a letter in which Raoul Nathan, the dramatic author, told him that one of our plays, received, studied, and rehearsed, would be acted on the following Saturday. The letter contained the tickets for a box.

Though to me this was like passing from martyrdom to heaven, the devil still cried to me, to trouble my joy, "Where are those thirty thousand francs?" But dignity, honor, all my *old self* forbade me to ask the question. It was on my lips; but I knew if the thought became language I must throw myself into the pond; and I resisted, with difficulty, the desire to speak. Oh! dearest, I suffered then something beyond the strength of woman to bear.

"You are wearying of this place, my poor Gaston," I said. "If you like, we will return to Paris."

"Return to Paris! why?" he said. "I merely wanted to know if I really have talent, and quaff a little of the punch of success."

Some day when he is at work I may perhaps play surprise when I look into his drawer and miss the money. But even so, shall I not tempt the answer "I lent it to such a one"? A man with presence of

mind like Gaston will surely say that or something like it.

My dear Renée, the outcome of this is that the great success of the play which all Paris is now running after belongs to us; though Nathan has all the glory, for our names are not given; I am only one of the stars which appear in the bills as "And M M. * * * ." I saw the first representation hidden in a proscenium box on the ground-floor.

July 1.

Gaston still works hard and still goes to Paris. He works at his plays to have an excuse to go there, and also to make money. We have three plays accepted and two more ordered. Oh! my dear, I am lost; I walk in darkness. I would burn my house if that would give me light. What is the meaning of Gaston's conduct? Is he ashamed of receiving money from me? His soul is too lofty to concern itself with such trifles. Besides, when a man begins to admit such scruples they are inspired in him by some condition of his heart. He will accept all things from the wife he loves, but he will take nothing from the wife he thinks of leaving or no longer loves. If he wants so much money it *must* be to spend it on a woman; if he wanted it only for himself he would take it from my purse without hesitation. He knows we have a hundred thousand francs laid by.

Thus, my own Renée, I have gone through the whole world of suppositions, and I have come to the conclusion, all things fairly considered, that I have a rival. He leaves me, for whom? I am resolved to *see her*.

July 10.

I have seen. I am lost. Yes, Renée, at thirty years of age, in all the prime of my beauty, rich with the resources of my mind, fresh, elegant, I am betrayed; and for whom? For an Englishwoman with big feet, and big bones, and a huge bosom, — a British cow! I cannot doubt it. Here is what happened lately.

Weary with doubt, jealous of Gaston's work, uneasy at his perpetual trips to Paris, I took some measures; and these measures made me degrade myself so low that I cannot tell you what they were. Three days ago I learned that when Gaston rides to Paris he goes to a house in the rue de la Ville-l'Évêque, where his loves are guarded by a discretion that is very unusual in Paris. The porter, evidently no talker, said little, but enough to reduce me to despair. I then resolved to sacrifice my life; all I wanted was to know all.

I took an apartment in Paris in the house directly opposite to that where Gaston goes, and I saw him with my own eyes ride into the courtyard on horseback. Too soon, too soon, I had a horrible, a dreadful revelation. This Englishwoman, who seemed to me about

thirty-six years of age, calls herself Madame Gaston. This discovery was like a death-blow to me. Next, I saw her going to the Tuileries with two children! Oh, Renée! two boys who are the living miniatures of Gaston. It is impossible not to be struck with so scandalous a resemblance. And such beautiful children! dressed with that magnificence with which Englishwomen dress their boys.

She has given him children! Ah! that explains all. This Englishwoman is a species of Greek statue come down from some pedestal; she has the whiteness and the coldness of marble; she walks pompously like a happy mother; she is beautiful, — yes, I must own that, — but she is heavy and clumsy as a line-of-battle ship. There is nothing refined or distinguished about her. Assuredly, she is not a lady; she is the daughter of some small farmer in a remote county, or the eleventh child of some poor minister.

I returned from Paris half-dead. As I rode back thoughts assailed me like demons. Can she be married to him? Did he know her before he married me? Was she the deserted mistress of some rich man, whom Gaston has suddenly met with? — but no, there were those children! I made suppositions without number, as if any were needed in presence of those children. The next day I returned to Paris, and found excuses enough to give the porter some money, and ask one

question: "Is Madame Gaston legally married?" To which he replied: —

"Yes, mademoiselle."

July 15.

My dear Renée, — Ever since that fatal morning I have redoubled in love for Gaston, and I find him more loving than ever; he is so young. Twenty times, when I rise in the morning, I have been on the point of saying to him: "You love me as well as you do that woman in the rue de la Ville-l'Évêque, don't you?"

I dare not explain to myself the meaning of my own submission.

"You love children?" I said to him one day.

"Oh, yes," he answered, "and we will have them."

"But how?"

"I have consulted doctors, and they all advise me to travel for a few months."

"Gaston," I said, "I could not love an absent man; if I could, I should have stayed in the convent all my days."

He began to laugh; but as for me, the very word *journey* stabbed me to the heart. Oh! surely, I'd rather jump from a window and be killed at once than roll down the staircase, clutching at every step.

Adieu, my darling; my death will be gentle, elegant, but sure. I made my will yesterday. You may come and see me now; the blockade is raised. My death,

like my life, shall be marked by distinction and grace. I will die my whole self.

Farewell, dear sister-soul, — you, whose affection has known no repelling, no ups, no downs, but like the equable shining of the moon, has ever soothed my heart. You and I may not have known the ardor of love, but neither have we tasted its poisonous bitterness. You have seen life wisely.

Farewell.

LV.

MADAME DE L'ESTORADE TO MADAME GASTON.

July 17.

My dear Louise, — I send this letter by a messenger before I am able to go to the Chalet myself. Be calm. Your last words seem to me so insane that I thought I did right, under the circumstances, in confiding everything to Louis. It was a matter of saving you from yourself.

If, like you, we have employed bad means, the result is so good that I am certain of your approval. I even went so low as to employ the police. But do not be anxious; this will remain a secret between the prefect and ourselves and you. Gaston is an angel. Here are the facts: —

His brother, Louis Gaston, died in Calcutta, in the service of a mercantile company, ruined financially at the very moment when he was about to return to France, rich, happy, and married. He had obtained a brilliant fortune through his marriage with the widow of an English merchant, after working for ten years to support himself and provide for his brother Marie, whom he idolized, and to whom he never wrote of his trials and disappointments, fearing to distress him. Just as he was about to return home prosperous and happy, he was overtaken by the failure of the famous house of Halmer. His wife's property was all in it, and she was ruined. The blow was so terrible that Louis Gaston went almost beside himself. The mental faculties, breaking down, affected his physical strength, and he died, as I said, in Bengal, where he had gone to try to rescue some shreds of his poor wife's fortune.

While prosperous, this dear, good captain had placed in the hands of a banker the sum of three hundred thousand francs for transmission to his brother; but this banker was dragged down by the Halmer failure and that last resource was taken from them. The widow of Louis Gaston, the beautiful woman whom you think your rival, is in Paris with two children (your nephews), and without a sou. Her jewels sufficed only to pay the passages of her family from India. Madame Louis went to the address of your husband's former lodgings. As he had

not left word where he was going, the people of the house referred her to Daniel d'Arthèz as the person most likely to give her information.

D'Arthèz generously provided for the immediate wants of the young widow. It seems that the captain had written to d'Arthèz at the time of his marriage, knowing him to be Marie's best friend, asking him how he could best send that large sum of money safely to his young brother. D'Arthèz replied that Marie Gaston had lately become rich through his marriage with the Baronne de Macumer.

On the arrival of the widow, d'Arthèz naturally wrote to your husband and told him the condition in which his sister-in-law and nephews were; and he also told him of the generous intentions of Louis Gaston and his wife toward him, which were only frustrated by ill-luck. Your dear Gaston, as you can well imagine, rushed to Paris. That is the cause and history of the first morning ride. During the last three years he had laid aside fifty thousand francs out of the sums you had forced him to take; and he now invested them in the Funds in his nephews' names, obtaining twelve hundred francs a year for each of them. He also took and furnished the apartment in which your sister-in-law lives; and he promised her three thousand francs every month for her expenses. This is the cause and history of the disappearance of that money, of his work for the

theatres, and of his great pleasure at the success of his first piece. You see now that Madame Gaston is not your rival, and bears your name legitimately.

A man as noble and as sensitive as Gaston concealed this from you, fearing your generosity. Your husband has never looked upon your means as his own. D'Arthèz read me a letter which he wrote to him at the time he asked him to be one of the witnesses of your marriage. In it, Marie Gaston said that his happiness would be complete if he had had no debts he was forced to let you pay, and if he could be rich himself. A virgin soul cannot prevent itself from having such feelings. They exist, or they do not exist; when they do exist their delicacy and their exactions are conceivable. It is thus quite simple that Gaston wished to do what was needful for his brother's widow and children himself, without calling upon you; especially when that widow had set apart for him three hundred thousand francs of her own fortune.

I have seen her; she is beautiful, she has a heart, her manners are distinguished, but she is not clever. The woman is a mother; is not that as good as telling you I took to her the instant I saw her with a child at her side, and another in her arms dressed like the baby of an English lord? *All for my children* is written upon her and upon everything about her.

So, my Louise, instead of being angry with your

Gaston, you may now have fresh reasons to love him. I have seen him. He is the most charming young man in all Paris. Ah yes, dear child, I can well comprehend that a woman should adore him; he has the countenance of his soul.

If I were you, I should take the widow and her children to the Chalet and build them a delightful little cottage near by; you could make the children your own. Therefore, dearest, be calm and happy; and give Gaston in your turn a surprise.

LVI.

MADAME GASTON TO MADAME DE L'ESTORADE.

Ah! my beloved Renée, hear the terrible, fatal, insolent words which that imbecile Lafayette said to his king: It is too late! Oh! my life, my beautiful life! no physician can give it back to me. Death has struck me. Alas! was I not born an ignis fatuus of a woman, destined to be extinguished as I shone? Torrents of tears are pouring from my eyes, but — I can only weep apart from *him*; I flee him, but he seeks me. My despair is all within my soul. Dante forgot my torment in his Hell.

Come and see me die.

LVII.

THE COMTESSE DE L'ESTORADE TO THE COMTE DE L'ESTORADE.

THE CHALET, August 7.

MY DEAR HUSBAND, — Take the children and go to Provence without me; I stay here with Louise, who has only a short time to live. I owe myself to her and to her husband, who will go mad, I think.

Since receiving that last letter which made me fly to Ville d'Avray with the physicians, I have not left her for a moment, and I could not write to you sooner, for this is the fifteenth night I have watched with her.

When I arrived I found her with Gaston, beautiful as ever and exquisitely dressed, her face all smiles and happiness, — sublime deception! These two beautiful children had told each other all. For a moment I, like Gaston, was the dupe of her artifice; but Louise presently wrung my hand and whispered: —

"I must deceive him, I am dying."

An icy chill came over me as I felt the burning heat of her hand and saw the flush in her cheeks. I was glad then of my own prudence, for, not wishing to alarm any one, I had asked the physicians who came with me to walk about the shrubbery for a while until I sent for them.

"Leave us now," she said to Gaston. "Two women who meet after a separation of five years have many secrets to tell each other; I know Renée has much to say to me."

Once alone, she flung herself in my arms unable to restrain her tears.

"But what is the matter?" I said. "I have brought you, in any case, the head-surgeon and the chief physician of the Hôtel-Dieu, together with Bianchon and another doctor; there are four of them."

"Oh! if they could only save me!" she cried. "There may be time; let them come! The same feeling that drove me to die will help me to live."

"But what have you done?"

"I have destroyed my lungs"

"How?"

"I put myself in perspirations at night, and then went to the shores of the pond and stood in the dew and mist. Gaston thinks I have a cold, but I am dying."

"Send Gaston to Paris on some errand," I said, "and I will bring the doctors."

I was almost out of my mind when I went to fetch them from the wood where I had left them.

Alas, my dear friend, when the consultation was over not one of those learned men would give me the slightest hope; they think she will go at the fall of the

leaves. Louise must die. The constitution of the dear creature has singularly served her purpose. She had, it seems, a tendency to the malady she has developed. She might have lived long, but the work of a few days has made her condition hopeless. I cannot tell you what I felt on listening to this judgment, which they carefully explained to me. You know that I have lived in Louise almost as much as in myself. I was overcome; I could not even take leave of those cruel men. Bathed in tears, I passed I know not how much time in painful meditation. A celestial voice roused me from my torpor.

"Well, I am doomed!" she said, laying her hand on my shoulder.

She made me rise and took me into her little salon.

"You will not leave me, will you?" she said with a supplicating look. "I wish so much not to see despair about me; above all, I wish to deceive *him*, and I shall have the strength to do it. I am full of energy and youth, and I will die standing. I am not sorry for myself; I die as I wished to die — at thirty, young, beautiful, and still *myself*. As for him, I should have made him unhappy; I see that. I am caught in the meshes of my love, like a doe struggling in the net, impatient at being held; I am the doe — and a very wild one. My groundless jealousy has already wounded his heart and made it suffer. The day when my sus-

picions found him indifferent — the inevitable return for jealousy — well, I should have died then. I have had my account with life. There are some who see sixty years' service on the muster-roll of the world who have never really lived two years; whereas I, though I am only thirty, have known sixty years of love. So, for him, for me, this end is happiness. But for you and me, my Renée, it is another thing; you lose a sister who loves you, and the loss is irreparable. You, alone, have cause to mourn my death."

She was silent for a long time; I could not speak, I could only see her through a veil of tears; then she said: "My death conveys a cruel lesson. My dear philosopher in petticoats was right. Marriage should not have passion for its basis — nor even love. Your life, my Renée, is a fine one; you have walked in the right path, loving your Louis more and more as you advanced, whereas by resting conjugal love on excessive ardor it must decrease. I have twice been wrong; and twice death strikes my happiness with its fleshless hand. It robbed me of the noblest, the most devoted of men; and to-day it tears me from the most beautiful, the most poetic husband woman ever had. But then, I have known the beau ideal, the perfection, of the soul, and that of the outward form. In Felipe, the soul mastered the body and transformed it; in Gaston, the heart, the mind, and the beauty are equal rivals. I

die adored — what more can I wish? Yes, to reconcile myself with God, whom, perhaps, I have too little thought of — to him I will spring, full of love, praying him to give me back my two angels in his heaven. Without them, paradise would be a desert to me. My example would be fatal; I am an exception. It is impossible to meet with many Felipes and Gastons; social law is here in harmony with natural law. Yes, woman is a feeble being, who ought in marriage to make the sacrifice of her will to that of the man, who ought in return to make her the sacrifice of his egoism. The rebellion our sex has lately raised and the complaints it utters with so much noise are silly blunders, and make us deserve the name of children which philosophers have given us."

And so she continued, in that sweet voice you know; making wise reflections in her own peculiar way, until Gaston returned, bringing with him his sister-in-law, her children, and their English nurse, whom Louise had asked him to go and fetch.

"See my pretty executioners!" she whispered to me as the children came in. "Was I mistaken? Are they not the image of their uncle?"

She was charming to Madame Louis Gaston, begging her to regard the Chalet as her own home, and doing its honors with those Chaulieu manners she possesses in the highest degree.

I wrote at once to the Duchesse de Chaulieu, the Duc de Rhétoré, and the Duc de Lenoncourt, also to Madeleine. I did well; for the next day Louise was unable to take a walk, in fact she did not rise till just in time to join us at dinner. Madeleine de Lenoncourt, the two brothers, and her mother arrived that evening. The coolness on the part of the family which Louise produced by her marriage has all passed away.

Since then the two brothers and the Duc de Chaulieu come out on horseback every morning, and the two duchesses spend all their evenings at the Chalet. Death unites as much as it separates; and it silences all petty passions. Louise is resplendent in grace and sense, and charm of soul and sensibility. To the last she shows that exquisite taste for which she is famed, and pours out for us the treasures of a mind which made her one of the queens of Paris.

"I want to be lovely even in my coffin," she said to me with that smile which is hers alone, as I put her to bed, where she has now languished for the last two weeks. There is not a trace of illness in her rooms; the medicines, drinks, etc., the whole medical apparatus is out of sight.

"I am making a good death, am I not?" she said to the rector of Sèvres, to whom she has given her confidence.

We cling to her and enjoy her like misers. Gaston,

who is now enlightened by our anxiety and prepared for the worst, is not wanting in courage, but he is vitally affected; and I should not be surprised if he followed his wife to the grave. Yesterday he said to me as we walked round the sheet of water before the house: —

"I ought to be the father of those children," pointing to his sister-in-law, who was at a little distance with his nephews. "I will never do anything to take me out of the world, but should it happen that I die, promise me that you will be a second mother to them, and that you will let your husband accept the guardianship which I intend to confide to him conjointly with my sister-in-law."

He said that without the least emotion and in the tone of a man who feels himself lost. His face replies with smiles to the smiles of his wife; I alone am not deceived by them. He displays a courage equal to hers. Louise wished to see her godson; but I was not sorry to tell her he was in Provence; she might have made him some liberal gift which would have pained me.

Adieu, my dear friend.

August 25 (her fête-day).

Last evening Louise was, for a short time only, delirious; but it was a graceful delirium, which proves that persons of mind do not become mad or foolish like common natures. She sang in a faint voice a few

Italian airs from the "Puritani" and "Somnambula", and "Moïse." We stood silently around her bed; even the Duc de Rhétoré had tears in his eyes, for it was evident that her soul was departing thus. She no longer saw us! but still there was all her natural grace and charm in that feeble song and in her divine gentleness.

Her last agony began during the night. At seven in the morning I lifted her from her bed myself; she had recovered some strength, and wished to be seated at her window. She asked for Gaston's hand. And then the loveliest angel we shall ever see upon this earth had left us nothing but her mortal remains.

The last sacraments had been administered to her the evening before, unknown to Gaston, who had gone to snatch a little sleep at that moment. She asked me to read to her in French the *De profundis*, while she sat there face to face with the beautiful nature she had created. She repeated mentally the words, clasping the hand of her husband who was kneeling beside her.

August 26.

My heart is broken. I have just seen her in her shroud; she is pale, with violet tints. Oh! my children, I want my children! Bring my children to me!

THE END.

ALBERT SAVARUS.

ALBERT SAVARUS.

TO

MADAME ÉMILE DE GIRARDIN.

One of the few salons in which the archbishop of Besançon presented himself during the Restoration was that of Madame la Baronne de Watteville, whom he particularly liked on account of her religious sentiments.

One word about this lady, — the most important female personage in Besançon.

Monsieur de Watteville, a descendant of the famous Watteville, the luckiest and the most illustrious of murderers and renegades (his extraordinary adventures are too well known historically to need relating here), — Monsieur de Watteville of the nineteenth century was just as gentle, as tranquil, as his ancestor of the great epoch was fiery and turbulent. After living all his life in La Comté, like a woodlouse in the crack of a panel, he married the heiress of the celebrated family de Rupt. Mademoiselle de Rupt added an income of twenty thousand francs from landed property to the ten thou-

sand francs a year, also from landed property, of the Baron de Watteville. The arms of the Swiss nobleman (the Wattevilles are Swiss) were quartered on those of the de Rupts. This marriage, arranged in 1802, took place in 1815, during the second Restoration. Three years after the birth of a daughter all Madame de Watteville's grandparents had died, and their property was divided. Monsieur de Watteville's house was then sold, and the family took possession of the fine mansion of the de Rupts in the rue de la Préfecture, the vast garden of which extended as far as the rue du Perron. Madame de Watteville, who was pious as a young girl, became devout after her marriage. She is one of the queens of that saintly fraternity which gives to the highest society of Besançon the gloomy tone and the prudish manners which harmonize so well with the character of the town.

Monsieur le Baron de Watteville, a spare little man, thin, and dull in mind, seemed to be used up without apparent reason why he should be, for he was gifted with a crass ignorance. But as his wife was a warm blonde, with a nature so repellent that it became proverbial (they still say in Besançon "sharp as Madame Watteville"), certain wits in his own social sphere were wont to declare that he had worn himself out against that rock, — "Rupt" being evidently derived from *rupes*. Scientific observers will

not fail to note that Rosalie was the sole offspring of the marriage.

Monsieur de Watteville passed his life in a luxurious workshop, engaged in turning. As an offset to this vocation he had taken up a fancy for collecting. To those medical philosophers who make a special study of madness, the disposition to collect is the first stage of mental alienation, showing itself in little things. The Baron de Watteville collected the shells and geological fragments of the vicinity of Besançon. A few critics, women especially, said of M. de Watteville, "He knows what he is about; he saw from the time of his marriage that he could never get the better of his wife, so he flung himself into a mechanical occupation and the pleasures of good eating."

The Rupt mansion was not without a certain splendor, worthy of the times of Louis XIV., and it bore signs of the nobility of the two families united in 1815. An old-fashioned luxury pervaded it, which was not like that of the present day. Crystal chandeliers designed in the form of leaves, brocaded hangings, carpets everywhere, gilded furniture, were all in harmony with the old liveries of the elderly servants. Though served on dingy family silver, round a centre-piece of glass bearing Dresden china, the food was exquisite. The wines, chosen by Monsieur de Watteville (who, to vary the monotony of existence, was his own butler), had

what might be called a departmental celebrity. Madame de Watteville's fortune was now considerably augmented; while that of her husband, consisting of the estate of Rouxey, bringing in, as we have said, ten thousand francs a year, had not been increased, like hers, by inheritance. It is unnecessary to call attention to the fact that Madame de Watteville's intimacy with the archbishop drew to her house the three or four distinguished or clever abbés who were attached to the archbishopric and were not averse to a good table.

At the assembling of a dinner-party, given on the occasion of some wedding early in September, 1834, and just as the women had gathered in a circle round the fireplace and the men were standing in groups near the windows, a general acclamation broke forth as Monsieur l'Abbé de Grancey was announced.

"Well, how about the suit?" they cried.

"Won!" replied the vicar-general. "The judgment of the court, of which we despaired, you all know why —"

This was an allusion to the composition of the Royal court in 1830; nearly all the legitimists having resigned their places in it.

"— has been given in our favor on all points, and reverses the judgment of the lower court."

"Every one thought you would lose your case."

"And so we should if it had not been for me. I

sent our lawyer to Paris, which enabled me to engage at the last moment the services of another man, to whom we owe our success, — an extraordinary man."

"In Besançon?" asked Monsieur de Watteville, innocently.

"In Besançon," replied the Abbé de Grancey.

"Yes, Savaron," remarked a handsome young man named de Soulas who was sitting by Madame de Watteville.

"He sat up five or six nights, studied the briefs and documents, had half a dozen interviews with me, each lasting several hours," resumed Monsieur de Grancey, who now made his appearance at the hôtel de Rupt for the first time in twenty days, "and it has ended by Monsieur Savaron completely beating the distinguished lawyer our opponents brought from Paris. The young man was really marvellous, so the council tell me. Our Chapter is doubly victorious, — victorious legally and politically too, because we have beaten liberalism in the person of the chosen advocate of the municipality. 'Our adversaries,' said Monsieur Savaron, 'cannot expect to obtain connivance everywhere for the ruin of archbishoprics.' The judge was forced to demand silence, for the audience applauded. So, the ownership of the old convent remains with the Chapter of the cathedral of Besançon. Monsieur Savaron invited the Paris lawyer to dinner as we left the courtroom; the

latter said, in accepting, 'All honor to the victor!' and congratulated him without the least resentment."

"Pray where did you unearth that lawyer?" said Madame de Watteville. "I never heard his name mentioned."

"You can see his windows from here," replied the vicar-general. "Monsieur Savaron lives in the rue du Perron; the garden of his house adjoins yours."

"He does not belong in La Comté," said Monsieur de Watteville.

"He seems to belong nowhere," said Madame de Chavoncourt; "no one knows where he comes from."

"But who is he?" persisted Madame de Watteville, taking the arm of Monsieur de Soulas to lead the way into the dining-room. "If he is a stranger, what brought him to Besançon? It seems a strange thing for a lawyer to do."

"Very strange!" repeated young Amédée de Soulas, whose biography here becomes necessary for the full understanding of this history.

From time immemorial France and England have exchanged airy nothings, all the more persistently because the tyranny of the custom house cannot reach them. The fashions which we call English in Paris are called French in London, and *vice versa*. The enmity of the two nations ceases at two points, — on the question of words, and on that of clothes. "God save the king"

— the national air of England — was composed by Lulli for the chorus of either "Athalie" or "Esther." The pannier petticoats, brought by an Englishwoman to Paris, were invented in London (all the world knows why) by a Frenchwoman, — the famous Duchess of Portsmouth. Paris began by laughing at them; so that the first Englishwoman who appeared in the Tuileries thus encased came near being crushed by the mob. But the fashion was adopted for all that, and it tyrannized over European womankind for half a century. After the peace of 1815 Paris laughed for a year at the long waists of the Britannic ladies, and went to see Pothier and Brunet in "The Funny Englishwomen;" but in 1816 and 1817 the belts of the Parisians, which cut their bosoms in 1814, had come down by degrees till they defined their hips. For the last ten years England has been making us little gifts of language. In place of the former *incroyable*, *merveilleux*, *élégant*, — three heirs of the *petit-maîtres*, the etymology of which is more or less indecent, — we now say "dandy" and "lion." The "lion" did not produce "la lionne." That term came from the famous song of Alfred de Musset: —

"Avez-vous vu dans Barcelone

. . . . .

C'est ma maîtresse et ma lionne."

There has been a fusion, or, if you like, confusion between the two terms and their dominant ideas.

When some nonsense amuses Paris — which is eager after nonsense as it is after masterpieces — it cannot be supposed that the provinces should refrain from getting hold of it. Therefore, as soon as the "lion" appeared in Paris, with his mane, his beard, his moustache, his waistcoats, above all, his eyeglass held to his eye without the aid of hands by a contraction of cheek and eyebrow, the chief towns of several departments beheld the glory of sub-lions, who protested, by the elegance of their apparel and the straps to their trousers, against the slipshod habits of their fellow-citizens. Thus it happened that Besançon enjoyed, in 1834, the presence of a lion in the person of Monsieur Amédée-Sylvain-Jacques de Soulas, spelled "Souleyas" at the time of the Spanish occupation. Amédée de Soulas is perhaps the only descendant of a Spanish family in Besançon. Spain sent her sons to do business in La Comté, but few Spaniards settled there. The Soulas remained because of their connection with Cardinal Grandvelle. Young de Soulas was constantly talking of leaving Besançon, — a melancholy, devout, unliterary town, a garrison town, the manners and morals of which may be worth depicting. This avowed intention on his part enabled him to live, like a man uncertain of his future, in three rooms, very slightly furnished, at the end of the rue Neuve where it joins the rue de la Préfecture.

Young Monsieur de Soulas could not get along with-

out a tiger. This tiger was the son of one of his farmers, — a squat little fellow of fourteen, named Babylas. The lion dressed his tiger very well, in a short iron-gray coat buckled in with a polished leather belt, blue plush breeches, a red waistcoat, varnished boots with tops, a high hat with broad hat-band, and gilt buttons bearing the crest of the Soulas family. Amédée gave the lad white cotton gloves, his washing, and thirty-six francs a month, for which the tiger fed himself, — a sum which seemed enormous to the grisettes of Besançon. Four hundred and twenty francs to a boy of fourteen, not counting presents! The presents consisted in the sale of his old and mended clothes, a *pourboire* when Soulas exchanged a horse, and the stable manure. The two horses, managed with the strictest economy, cost, one with another, eight hundred francs a year. The sum total for the lion's supplies from Paris, consisting of perfumery, cravats, jewelry, boot-polish and clothes, came to twelve hundred francs. If to this you add groom, that is, tiger, horses, immaculate linen, and a rent of six hundred francs, you will find a total outlay of three thousand francs a year. Now the father of young Monsieur de Soulas had left him an income of only four thousand, the product of a few rather poor farms, all requiring outlays, which outlays caused the lion painful uncertainties in the matter of revenue; so that he could scarcely count on more than three francs

a day for his maintenance, his pocket-money, and for cards. In consequence of this he dined out frequently, and breakfasted with remarkable frugality. When he was absolutely forced to dine at his own expense, he sent his tiger to a restaurant for a couple of dishes of food — not to cost more than twenty-five sous for the two. Young Monsieur de Soulas had the reputation of extravagance, — he was thought capable of committing "follies;" whereas the poor fellow could only make both ends meet at the end of the year by an astuteness, a genius for management, which would have made the fame of a good housekeeper. People were ignorant in those days, especially at Besançon, how much six francs' worth of boot-polish, yellow gloves at fifty sous a pair, cleaned (in profoundest secrecy) to make them serve three times, cravats at ten francs which lasted three months, four waistcoats at twenty-five francs, and trousers strapped below the boot, cut into a capital. How should it be otherwise, inasmuch as we see women in Paris paying particular attention to empty-headed fellows who visit them and get the better of really remarkable men by reason of those frivolous advantages which may be bought for fifteen louis — including hair-frizzing and fine linen shirts.

If this unfortunate young man seems to have become a lion on rather cheap terms, you must know that Amédée de Soulas had been three times to Switzerland,

twice to Paris, once from Paris to London. He was regarded as an intelligent traveller who could say: "In England, when I was there," etc. Dowagers would remark to him: "You who have been in England," etc. He had even gone as far as Lombardy, and skirted the Italian lakes. He read the new books; and while cleaning his gloves his tiger Babylas was told to reply to visitors: "Monsieur is studying." This led some conservative Besancians to endeavor to depreciate him with the remark: "He is a man of *advanced ideas*." But Amédée possessed the faculty of enunciating with true Besancian gravity the commonplace remarks of the day, and this gave him the reputation of being one of the most enlightened members of the aristocracy. He wore fashionable jewelry, and in his head he carried such thoughts as were put into it by the newspapers.

In 1834 Amédée was twenty-five years old, of medium height, dark complexion, broad chest, strong shoulders, thighs somewhat too round, feet already fat, hands white and dimpled, with a chin beard, moustachios that rivalled those of the garrison, a good-natured fat face, rather ruddy, a flattened nose, brown eyes without expression, and nothing Spanish about him. He was advancing with great strides towards an obesity which would certainly prove fatal to his ambitions. His finger-nails were well cared-for, his beard carefully trimmed, and every article of his clothing was kept

with a nicety that was truly English. Thus it came to pass that Amédée de Soulas was considered the handsomest man in Besançon. The hair-dresser, who came to him daily at a regular hour (another luxury, costing sixty francs a year), held him up as the sovereign arbiter of elegance and fashion. Amédée slept late, made his toilet, mounted his horse at twelve o'clock, and rode out to one of his farms to practise with a pistol. He laid as much stress on this occupation as Lord Byron in his later years. Then he returned to Besançon about three o'clock, admired as he rode along by all the grisettes and such persons as happened to be at their windows. After his pretended studies, which lasted till four o'clock, he dressed to dine out, spent the evening playing whist in various salons of the Besancian aristocracy, and went home to bed at eleven o'clock. No existence was ever more undisguised, more virtuous, more irreproachable in every way, for he punctually attended the church services on Sundays and feast-days.

To make the reader understand how this mode of life could have wounded the proprieties, it is necessary to give a brief explanation of Besançon. No town offers a more stolid, dumb resistance to progress. At Besançon the administration, the public employés, the military, in fact all who belong to the government and who are sent from Paris to occupy any post whatever,

are designated in a lump by the expressive term "colony." The colony is neutral ground, — the only ground where, as at church, the aristocratic society and the bourgeois society ever meet. Here begin, apropos of a word, a look, a gesture, hatreds of family to family, feuds between bourgeois women and aristocratic women, which last till death, and widen the already impassable ditch by which the two societies are separated. Excepting the families of the Clermont-Mont-Saint-Jean, de Beauffremont, de Scey, de Gramont, and a few others who live exclusively on their estates in La Comté, the Besancian nobility dates back only two centuries, to the period of the conquest of Louis XIV. This society is essentially parliamentary, with a pride, stiffness, gravity, assumption, haughtiness, which can be compared with no others, not even those of the court of Austria; for in these qualities the Besancians could abash every salon in Vienna. As for Victor Hugo, Nodier, or Fourier, the true glories of the town, no one ever thinks of them; they are never mentioned. The marriages of the nobility are arranged while the children are still in their cradles, — so carefully are all things planned, the least as well as the greatest. Never has a foreigner, an outsider, contrived to slip into any of these houses; and it requires efforts of diplomacy such as Prince Talleyrand might be glad to know and profit by in a congress, before the colonels and titled

officers in garrison, many of them belonging to the noblest families in France, can be admitted. In 1834 Amédée was the sole individual in Besançon who wore straps to his trousers. This will explain why young Monsieur de Soulas was a "lion." But perhaps a little anecdote will make you thoroughly understand Besançon.

Not long before the time at which this history begins, the Préfecture had occasion to send to Paris for an editor for its journal, — it being necessary to protect that paper against the "little Gazette" which the "great Gazette" had lately hatched in Besançon, and also against the "Patriot" in which republicanism was rampant. Paris sent down a young man, quite ignorant of La Comté, who led off in a column of local items in the style of the "Charivari;" whereupon the head of the administration sent for the journalist and said to him: "You must understand, monsieur, that we are grave, — more than grave, dull; we do not wish to be amused; we are furious when made to laugh. Let your writings be as hard to digest as the heaviest lucubrations of the 'Revue des Deux-Mondes;' and even then you will hardly attain to the tone of the Besancians." The editor took the hint and wrote thenceforth a philosophical patois, most difficult to understand. He met with complete success.

If young Monsieur de Soulas did not fall in the esti-

mation of the salons of Besançon it was out of pure vanity on their part; the aristocracy was not unwilling to appear to modernize itself in the person of one of its own members, and so present to Parisian nobles who might visit La Comté a young man who was in some degree like themselves. But as for Amédée, all his hidden labor, the powder he flung in the eyes of society, his apparent follies, his latent wisdom, had an aim; otherwise the Besancian lion would not have been born in Besançon. Amédée wished to make an advantageous marriage by proving at the right time that his farms were not mortgaged, and that he had laid by some money; but he also wanted to make himself a figure in society; he wished to be thought the handsomest as well as the most elegant of men in order to win the notice and eventually the hand of Mademoiselle Rosalie de Watteville.

In 1830, when young Monsieur de Soulas began his career of dandyism, Rosalie was fourteen. In 1834 Mademoiselle de Watteville was reaching the age when young girls are easily struck by just those peculiarities which called the attention of society to Amédée. Many lions make themselves lions for the sake of their schemes and speculations. The Wattevilles, who for twelve years past had had an income of fifty thousand francs, did not spend more than twenty-four thousand francs a year, although they received the upper society of

Besançon on Mondays and Fridays. On Mondays they gave a dinner, on Fridays an evening party. Consequently, it was easy to calculate the amount of twenty-six thousand francs laid by annually for the last twelve years, and invested with the sagacity which distinguished the old nobility. It was generally believed that Madame de Watteville, thinking herself rich enough in lands, had invested her savings in the three-per-cents in 1830. For the last five years, therefore, the lion had worked like a mole to reach the upper regions of that stern woman's good-will, all the while behaving in a manner calculated to flatter the vanity of Mademoiselle de Watteville. The baroness was in the secret of the many devices by which Amédée was able to keep up an appearance in Besançon, and she esteemed him the more for them. Soulas had put himself under her wing when she was thirty years old, and at that time he had the courage to admire her and make an idol of her; he even reached the point of relating to her (but to no one else) the broad stories which some canting women are fond of hearing, enabled as they are by their own high virtue to look into the pit without falling, or to finger the meshes of the devil without entanglement. Do you now see why this lion did not allow himself the slightest intrigue? He made his life as plain as day; he lived, as it were, in the streets, so as to play the part towards the baroness of sacrificing such things,

all the while regaling her mind with sins she denied to her flesh. A man who has the privilege of slipping questionable tales into the ear of a *dévote* is always charming in her eyes. If this exemplary lion had known human nature a little better he might, without danger, have allowed himself a few love-affairs among the grisettes of Besançon who regarded him as a king; his intimacy with the stern and prudish baroness might even have been promoted thereby. To Rosalie this Cato seemed extravagant; he professed elegance; showed her in perspective the brilliant rôle of a fashionable woman in Paris, where he proposed to be sent as deputy. These sagacious manœuvres were crowned with success. In 1834 the mothers of the forty noble families which composed the upper Besancian society cited young Monsieur Amédée de Soulas as the most charming young man in Besançon. No one ventured to dispute his position in the hôtel de Rupt, and all Besançon regarded him as the future husband of Rosalie de Watteville. In fact, a few words had already been exchanged on that subject between the baroness and Amédée, — the utter insignificance of the baron giving certainty to their plans.

Mademoiselle Rosalie de Watteville, to whom her fortune (which would some day be enormous) gave much importance, brought up within the circle of the hôtel de Rupt, — which her mother rarely quitted, so

attached was she to the dear archbishop, — had been from her earliest childhood sternly repressed by an exclusively religious education, and by the despotism of a mother who controlled her rigidly by principles. Rosalie knew absolutely nothing. Is it knowing anything to have studied geography in Guthrie, sacred history, ancient history, French history, and the four rules, — all passed through the sieve of an old Jesuit teacher? Drawing, music, and dancing were forbidden, as more likely to corrupt than to embellish life. The baroness taught her daughter every possible stitch in needlework and embroidery, — plain-sewing, satin-stitch, drawn-work. At seventeen years of age Rosalie had read nothing but "Les Lettres édifiantes" and works on the science of heraldry. Her eyes had never been contaminated by a newspaper. She heard mass every morning in the cathedral, to which her mother took her, returned to breakfast, made a little turn in the garden, and then took her work and sat beside the baroness, who received visits till dinner time. After dinner, unless it were Monday or Friday, she accompanied Madame de Watteville to the houses of their friends, — not, however, saying anything but what the maternal orders sanctioned.

At eighteen, Mademoiselle de Watteville was a delicate, thin girl, — flat, blond, white, and insignificant to the last degree. Her eyes (of a pale blue) were

improved by the play of the eyelids, which, when lowered, threw shadows on the cheeks. A few reddish spots injured the whiteness of her forehead, which was well modelled. Her face was exactly like those saints of Albert Dürer and the painters who preceded Perugino, — the same plump shape, though slender, same delicacy saddened by ecstasy, same stiff naïveté. Everything about her, even her attitude, resembled those virgins whose beauty is not perceived in all its mystic lustre except by the eyes of a thoughtful observer. She had handsome hands (though they were somewhat red), the prettiest of feet, — the feet of a lady of the manor. As a usual thing, she wore gowns of a simple cotton material; but on Sundays and fête days her mother allowed her to put on silk. The fashion of her clothes, which were made in Besançon, made her almost ugly; whereas her mother endeavored to borrow grace, beauty, and elegance from Paris, whence she obtained every article of her own dress and toilet, thanks to the services of young Monsieur de Soulas. Rosalie had never worn silk stockings or boots, always cotton stockings and leather shoes. On gala days she had a muslin gown, her hair was dressed, and she wore bronze kid shoes.

This training and Rosalie's modest air and manner concealed an iron nature. Physiologists and profound observers of human nature will tell you, to your great

amazement, perhaps, that temperaments, characters, mind and genius reappear in families at long intervals, precisely like what are called hereditary diseases. Thus talent, like gout, often skips two generations. We have proof of this phenomenon in the illustrious instance of George Sand, in whom are revived the vigor, power, and congenital qualities of Maréchal Saxe, her grandfather. The determined nature, the romantic audacity of the famous Watteville had returned to earth in the soul of his great-niece, where they were strengthened still further by the tenacity and pride of the blood of the Rupts. But these virtues, or defects, if you prefer to call them so, were as deeply hidden in the soul of this young girl, apparently so soft and yielding, as the boiling lava is hidden in the breast of a mountain before it becomes a volcano. Madame de Watteville alone may have suspected this legacy of two bloods. She was so stern in her treatment of Rosalie that she replied one day to the archbishop, who blamed her harshness: "Let me manage her, monseigneur; I know her, — she has more than one Beelzebub under her skin."

The baroness watched her daughter all the more closely because she considered her credit as a mother at stake. Besides, she had nothing else to do. Clotilde de Rupt, then thirty-five years of age, and virtually the widow of a man who spent his life turning egg-cups

out of every kind of wood, intent only on making circles of six lines in iron-wood, and snuff-boxes for all his acquaintance, coquetted, in due propriety, with Amédée de Soulas. When this young man was at her house she would often send her daughter from the room and then recall her, trying to detect some impulse of jealousy in that young soul, for the purpose of subduing it. She was like the police in their treatment of Republicans; but she only wasted her efforts. Rosalie never showed the least signs of revolt. Then the cold *dévote* would reproach her for want of feeling. Rosalie knew her mother well enough to be certain that if she did show any liking for young Monsieur de Soulas she would bring a sharp reprimand upon her head. Therefore she replied to all her mother's provocations with speeches very improperly called jesuitical; for the Jesuits were strong, and these reticences are only breastworks behind which timidity shelters itself. At such times the mother accused the daughter of dissimulation. If, unluckily, a flash of the real Watteville and de Rupt nature showed itself, the mother demanded the reverence that children owed to parents, to reduce Rosalie to passive obedience. This secret battle went on in the inmost recesses of domestic life, behind closed doors. The vicar-general, that dear Abbé de Grancey, the friend of the late archbishop, wise as he was in his capacity as grand penitentiary of the diocese, could not

discover whether this struggle had roused a hatred between mother and daughter, whether the mother was jealous in advance of the daughter, or whether the suit paid by Amédée to the daughter through the mother had gone beyond the prescribed limits. In his position as friend of the family he did not confess either the mother or the daughter. Rosalie, too often beaten, morally speaking, on account of young Monsieur de Soulas, could not, to use a familiar phrase, endure him; so that, whenever he addressed her with an attempt to capture her heart she answered him coldly. This repugnance, visible only to the eyes of her mother, was a perpetual subject of admonition.

"Rosalie, I do not see why you affect such coldness to Amédée; is it because he is the friend of the family, and is agreeable to us, your father and me?"

"Why, mamma," said the poor girl, one day, "should not I be blamed still more if I treated him kindly?"

"What is the meaning of that?" cried Madame de Watteville. "What do you mean by those words? Your mother is unjust, is she; and in your opinion she would be in any case? Let me never hear such an answer to your mother again," etc.

This quarrel lasted three hours and three quarters. Rosalie remarked upon it. Her mother became white with anger and ordered her to her room, where Rosalie

studied the meaning of the scene, without finding any — so innocent was she. Thus it was that young Monsieur de Soulas, whom all Besançon believed to be very near his goal, cravats displayed, boots polished, — the goal which had compelled him to use so much black wax for his moustache, so many pretty waistcoats, horse-shoes, and corsets (for he wore a leathern girth, the corset of lions), — Amédée, we say, was no further advanced in his suit than the next comer, though he had on his side the worthy and noble Abbé de Grancey. At the time when this history begins, however, Rosalie did not yet know that the young Comte Amédée de Soulas was her destined husband.

"Madame," said Monsieur de Soulas, replying to the baroness while the very hot soup in his plate was cooling slightly, and affecting to give a quasi-romantic tone to his narrative, "one fine morning the mailcoach brought to the Hôtel National a Parisian, who, after looking about for lodgings, finally took the first floor of Mademoiselle Galard's house in the rue du Perron. Then the stranger went straight to the mayor's office and made his declaration of domicile; after that he put his name down on the roll of barristers before the Court, and presented his credentials; he also left a card on all his fellow lawyers, the members of the administration, the counsellors and the judges, on which card appeared the name of — Albert Savaron."

"The name of Savaron is celebrated," remarked Mademoiselle de Watteville, who was strong in heraldry; "the Savarons of Savarus are one of the oldest, noblest, and wealthiest families in Belgium."

"He is a Frenchman without descent," replied Amédée de Soulas. "If he takes the arms of Savaron de Savarus, he must add the bar sinister. There is no other Savarus in Brabant now than a rich heiress who is not married."

"A bar sinister is of course the sign of illegitimacy; but the illegitimate son of a Comte de Savarus is noble," returned Rosalie.

"That 's enough, mademoiselle," said her mother.

"You were determined she should know heraldry," remarked Monsieur de Watteville, "and she knows it well!"

"Pray go on, Monsieur de Soulas," said the baroness.

"You can understand that in a town where all is classed, defined, known, settled, marked, and numbered, like Besançon, Albert Savaron has been received by his fellow-lawyers without difficulty. They contented themselves with saying: 'Here 's a poor devil that does n't know Besançon. Who on earth advised him to come here? What does he expect to do? And then, to send his card to the magistrates instead of calling in person! What a blunder! So, at the end

of three days not another word about Savaron! He has taken the former valet of the late Monsieur Galard, — Jérôme, — who knows a little about cooking. Monsieur Savaron is all the more forgotten now because no one ever sees him or meets him."

"Does n't he go to mass?" asked Madame de Chavoncourt.

"He goes on Sundays to Saint-Pierre, but always to the first mass, at eight o'clock. He rises every night between one and two and works till eight, when he breakfasts; then he works again. He walks in the garden, and goes round it fifty or sixty times; after which he dines and goes to bed between six and seven o'clock in the evening."

"How do you know all that?" asked Madame de Chavoncourt.

"In the first place, madame, I live in the rue Neuve, at the corner of the rue du Perron; I look out on the house where this mysterious personage is now residing; then there are protocols mutually passing between my tiger and Jérôme."

"Do you converse with Babylas?"

"What else can I do during our rides?"

"How came you to choose a stranger for your lawyer?" said Madame de Watteville, addressing the vicar-general.

"The chief-justice played a trick on him," replied

Monsieur de Grancey, "and appointed him to defend before the court of assizes an almost idiotic peasant accused of forgery. Monsieur Savaron got the poor man acquitted by proving his innocence, and showing that he was merely the tool of the real criminals. Not only did his method triumph, but he obtained the arrest of two of the witnesses for the prosecution, who have since been found guilty. His speeches had a great effect on the court and jury. One of the latter — a merchant — trusted Monsieur Savaron with a delicate case the very next day, and he won it. Placed as we were, and finding it impossible for Monsieur Berryer to come to Besançon, Monsieur de Garcenault advised us to employ Monsieur Albert Savaron, and predicted our success. As soon as I saw him and listened to him I had faith in him, and I was not mistaken."

"Is there anything extraordinary about him?" asked Madame de Chavoncourt.

"Undoubtedly, madame," replied the vicar-general.

"Then do explain it to us," said Madame de Watteville.

"The first time that I saw him," said the Abbé de Grancey, "he received me in the next room to the antechamber (the former salon of old Galard), which he has had painted in old oak; the walls are entirely covered with law-books contained in book-cases also painted in old oak. This painting and the books were

the only luxuries in the room. The furniture consisted merely of a secretary in old carved wood, six old chairs covered with tapestry, brown curtains with green borders at the windows, and a green carpet on the floor. The stove in the antechamber warmed the room. While waiting I had no expectation of seeing a young man. This singular frame proved to be completely in harmony with the figure it surrounds. Monsieur Savaron entered, wearing a black merino dressing-gown, tied round the waist with a red cord, red slippers, a red flannel shirt, and a red cap —"

"The devil's livery!" cried Madame de Watteville.

"Yes," said the abbé, "but a splendid head; black hair mingled with a few white threads, such hair as we see in Saint Peter or Saint Paul in our pictures, thick shining masses, wiry as a horse's mane; a throat round and white as a woman's; a magnificent forehead with one furrow down the centre of it, the furrow that grand projects, high thoughts, deep meditations imprint on the foreheads of great men; an olive complexion marbled with red; a square nose, eyes of fire, the cheeks somewhat hollow, marked with two long wrinkles — signs of suffering; a sardonic smile, a small chin rather too short, crow's-feet about the temples, cavernous eyes rolling under the arched eyebrows like globes of fire; but with it all, in spite of these indications of violent passions, a calm air, deep resignation, a voice

of penetrating sweetness, which afterwards astonished me in the courtroom with its flexibility, — the voice of an orator, sometimes pure and candid, sometimes insinuating, but thundering when necessary, or lending itself to sarcasm — when it became incisive. The man is of middle height, neither stout nor thin. He has the hands of a prelate. The second time I called upon him he received me in his bedroom which adjoins the library. He smiled at my surprise when I saw a shabby bureau, an old carpet, a collegian's bed, and cotton curtains at the window. He came out from an inner room where no one is allowed to enter, not even Jérôme, so I hear, who merely knocks at the door. Monsieur Savaron locked that door in my presence. The third time I went there he was breakfasting in his library in the most frugal manner. This time he had sat up all night examining our documents ; and as I had our lawyer with me, and poor Monsieur Girardet is very prolix, I was able to study Monsieur Savaron carefully. He is not an ordinary man, that is very certain. There is more than one secret behind that mask, which is both terrible and gentle, patient and impatient, full yet sunken. He stoops slightly, like those who carry some heavy burden."

" Why did such an eloquent man leave Paris? What is his object in coming to Besançon? Some one should have told him that strangers have no chance of success

here. People may make use of him, but the Besançons won't let him use them." Such were the comments of the company as the abbé told his tale.

"And pray why, since he did come, has he kept in such obscurity that it was only a caprice of the chief justice which brought him into notice?" asked the handsome Madame de Chavoncourt.

"After studying that fine head," continued the Abbé de Grancey, looking at his questioner with an air which seemed to say he was concealing something, "and above all, since I heard him this morning replying to one of the eagles of the Paris bar, I believe that this man, who must be about thirty-five, will some day produce a great sensation."

"Why concern ourselves with that? You have gained your suit and paid him," said Madame de Watteville, noticing that her daughter seemed to hang upon the lips of the vicar-general ever since he had begun to speak.

The conversation then took another turn and nothing more was said of Albert Savaron.

The portrait sketched by the ablest priest in the diocese had not only the attraction of a novel for Rosalie but it was in itself a romance for her. For the first time in her life she encountered the extraordinary, the marvellous, — which all youthful imaginations cherish and rush to meet with the eagerness that is very

keen at Rosalie's age. What an ideal being was Albert, gloomy, suffering, toiling, when compared in her mind with that fat and chubby Amédée, bursting with health, gallant in speech, venturing to talk of elegance in presence of the ancient grandeur of the Comtes de Rupt! Amédée was nothing to her but the cause of quarrels and reprimands, — besides, she knew him only too well; whereas this Albert Savaron offered her many an enigma to solve.

"Albert Savaron de Savarus," she kept repeating to herself.

Could she only see him, — just perceive him! Such was the desire of the girl's soul, hitherto without desires. She went over in her heart, in her imagination, in her head, every word that the Abbé de Grancey had uttered, for each of them had struck home.

"A fine forehead!" she said to herself, looking at the foreheads of all the men around the table. "I don't see a fine one here. Monsieur de Soulas's is too prominent; Monsieur de Grancey's is handsome, but he is seventy years old and bald, and you don't know where the forehead begins —"

"What is the matter, Rosalie; why don't you eat your dinner?"

"I am not hungry, mamma," she said. "Hands of a prelate!" she went on, to herself. "I can't remember those of the archbishop, though he confirmed me."

At last, in the turnings and twistings of the labyrinth of her memory, she suddenly remembered that on waking one night she had seen from her bed, through the trees of the two adjoining gardens, a window brilliantly illuminated. "It must have been his light," she said to herself. "Then I can see him! I will see him!"

"Monsieur de Grancey, is the Chapter's lawsuit ended?" said Rosalie, suddenly, during a moment's silence.

Madame de Watteville exchanged a rapid glance with the vicar-general.

"What is that to you, my dear child?" she said to Rosalie, with a pretended gentleness which put her daughter on her guard for the rest of her days.

"They may appeal," replied the abbé, "but they will think twice about it."

"I could never have believed that Rosalie would think about a lawsuit during a whole dinner," remarked Madame de Watteville.

"Nor I either," said Rosalie, in a reflective way which made every one laugh, "but Monsieur de Grancey seemed so interested that I was interested too."

They rose from table, and returned to the salon. During all that evening Rosalie listened in hopes that Albert Savaron would be again spoken of. But beyond the congratulations which each new arrival offered

to the abbé on the success of the lawsuit, in which no one mentioned the lawyer, nothing further was said. Mademoiselle de Watteville waited for night with the utmost impatience. She determined to rise between two and three o'clock to look at the lighted study-windows of Albert Savaron. When the hour came she felt a sort of happiness in looking at the gleam which the lawyer's candles cast through the trees now almost shorn of their foliage. Helped by the excellent eyesight of a young girl, which was strengthened by curiosity, she saw Albert writing, and she thought she could distinguish the color of his furniture, which seemed to her red. The chimney above his roof was sending up a thick column of smoke.

"While all the world sleeps, he wakes — like God," she said to herself.

The education of young girls involves so many serious problems (for the future of a nation lies in the hands of mothers) that the University of France has long resigned the duty of thinking of it. Here, for instance, is one of those problems: Should young girls be enlightened? Should their minds be repressed? It is unnecessary to say that religious education means repression. If you enlighten them you make them demons before their time; if you repress them and prevent them from thinking, you meet with sudden explosions, which Molière has so well described in his Agnes, and

you put that repressed mind, so fresh, so perspicacious, rapid, and consecutive (like that of a savage), at the mercy of some event, like the fatal crisis produced in Mademoiselle de Watteville by the imprudent picture drawn at the dinner-table by the most prudent of the abbés of the prudent Chapter of Besançon.

The next morning, as Mademoiselle de Watteville was dressing, she naturally watched Albert Savaron, who was walking in the garden which adjoined that of the hôtel de Rupt.

"What would have become of me," she thought, "had he lived elsewhere? Here I can at least see him. What is he thinking of?"

After seeing, at a distance, this remarkable man, the only man whose individuality seemed to vigorously produce itself above the mass of persons whom she had hitherto known, Rosalie jumped to the idea of penetrating his private life, finding out the reasons of so much mystery, hearing that eloquent voice, obtaining the glance of those wonderful eyes. She wanted all, but how could she obtain it?

During the day, she worked at her embroidery with the obtuse attention of a young girl who (like Molière's Agnes) appears to think of nothing, all the while reflecting so deeply that her schemes prove infallible. The result of Rosalie's profound meditation was a desire to confess. Accordingly, the next morning she

had a little conference at Saint-Pierre with the Abbé Giroud, and cajoled him so cleverly that her confession was appointed for Sunday morning at a quarter past eight during the eight o'clock mass. She told a dozen fibs in order to be in the church, only once, at the hour when the lawyer heard mass. Then a spasm of excessive fondness for her father seized her. She went to see him in his workshop; asked him many questions about his turning — all for the purpose of advising him to do larger things, columns for instance. Having put columns into his head — one of the noted difficulties of the art of turning — she advised him to take advantage of a mound of stones in the garden to make a grotto, and on that to erect a little temple, like a belvedere, round which his columns would be an object of admiration to all the town.

In the midst of the joy which such an idea infused into the mind of the poor, unoccupied man, Rosalie took occasion to say as she kissed him, "Be sure not to tell my mother that I suggested the plan. She would scold me."

"Don't be uneasy about that," replied Monsieur de Watteville, who groaned like his daughter under the terrible oppression of the descendant of the de Rupts.

Thus Rosalie secured the building of a charming observatory from which to look into the lawyer's study. There are men for whom young girls are capable of the

like masterpieces of diplomacy, who, like Albert Savaron, never suspect it.

Sunday morning, so impatiently awaited, came at last. Rosalie's toilet was performed with a nicety which made Mariette, the lady's maid of Mme. and Mlle. de Watteville, smile.

"I never saw Mademoiselle so particular before," she remarked.

"I have observed," said Rosalie, with a glance at Mariette which sent the color into the woman's cheeks, "that there are certain days when you are more particular than on others."

As she left the portico, crossed the courtyard, passed through the gate, and walked along the street, Rosalie's heart beat vehemently, as all hearts do when they foresee some great event. She had never known till then what it was to walk in the streets; for a moment she fancied her mother must see her plans in her face, and would forbid her to go to confession. She felt a new blood tingling in her feet, and lifted them as though they were stepping on fire. She had, naturally, made the appointment with the confessor at a quarter past eight, but she had told her mother it was at eight, so as to have a quarter of an hour to remain near Albert. She reached the church before the mass began, and after making a short prayer she went to see if the Abbé Giroud was in the confessional, for the sole pur-

pose of loitering about the church and placing herself where she could be sure of seeing Albert as he entered the church.

A man must be atrociously ugly not to seem handsome under the circumstances in which Mademoiselle de Watteville's curiosity placed him. Albert Savaron — really remarkable — made all the more impression on Rosalie because his action, carriage, attitude, even his clothing, bore signs of something which it is difficult to explain except by the word *mysterious*. He entered. The church, dark until then, seemed to Rosalie illuminated. She was fascinated by his slow movements, solemn as those of men who bear the world on their shoulders, whose look and gesture express either a devastating or a dominating thought. Looking at him, Rosalie understood the words of the vicar-general to their fullest extent. Yes, those brown eyes, flecked with gold, veiled an ardor of the soul which betrayed itself in sudden flashes. Rosalie, with an imprudence which was not lost on Mariette, put herself in the lawyer's way so that he was forced to exchange a look with her, — a look which convulsed her blood and made it throb and boil as if its heat were doubled. As soon as Albert was seated Mademoiselle de Watteville chose her place from which she could see him during the time before she entered the confessional, When Mariette said to her, "There is Monsieur Giroud!" it seemed

to Rosalie as if only a moment had elapsed. When she left the confessional, mass was over, and the lawyer had left the church.

"The vicar-general was right," she thought, — "*he* suffers. Why should that eagle — for he has indeed an eagle's eye — why should he light at Besançon? Oh, I must know all — but how can I?"

Under the compulsion of this new desire, Rosalie set her stitches with more than usual exactitude, and concealed her secret thoughts beneath an air of innocence which played simplicity and deceived even Madame de Watteville. Since that Sunday morning when Mademoiselle de Watteville received the lawyer's glance, or, to describe it otherwise, her baptism of fire, — magnificent expression of Napoleon which may well serve in love, — she was eager in promoting the kiosk.

"Mamma," she said, as soon as two columns were ready, "papa has taken a singular idea into his head; he is turning columns for a kiosk, which he wants to erect on that pile of stones in the middle of the garden. Do you approve of that? As for me, I think —"

"I approve of all your father does," replied Madame de Watteville, curtly. "It is the duty of wives to submit to their husbands, even if they do not agree with their ideas. Why should I oppose an unimportant thing if it amuses your father?"

"Only because we shall overlook Monsieur de Soulas, and Monsieur de Soulas could see us when we are there, and people might say —"

"Rosalie, are you assuming to guide your parents, and to know more than they do of life and its proprieties?"

"I will say no more, mamma. After all, papa says the grotto will be a nice cool place, where we can take our coffee."

"Your father is full of excellent ideas," replied Madame de Watteville, who at once went to see the columns.

She gave her approbation to the plan, and advised her husband to erect his kiosk at the farther end of the garden, where it could not be overlooked by Monsieur de Soulas, while, on the other hand, it had a fine view into the windows of Monsieur Savaron. A contractor was employed to make the grotto, on the summit of which was to stand the kiosk, reached by a little path, three feet wide, and bordered among the rocks with periwinkle, iris, viburnum, ivy, honeysuckle, and the wild grape. The baroness suggested lining the interior with rustic woodwork (then in fashion for flower-stands), and putting a mirror at the lower end, a divan with cushions, and a rustic table with the bark on it. Monsieur de Soulas advised an asphalt floor. Rosalie proposed a hanging lamp, also in rustic woods.

"The Watteville's are doing something charming in their garden," said Besançon.

"They are rich, — they can afford two or three thousand francs for a fancy."

"Two or three thousand francs!" cried Madame de Chavoncourt.

"Yes, at least that much," said young Monsieur de Soulas; "they have sent to Paris for a man to do the rustic work, and it will certainly be charming. Monsieur de Watteville means to make the lamp himself, — he is already carving the frame."

"They say that Berquet is digging a cave."

"No," said young Monsieur de Soulas, "he is only securing the kiosk to the grotto with mortar so as to prevent all dampness."

"You seem to know everything that goes on in that house," said Madame de Chavoncourt, with some sourness, as she glanced at one of her tall girls, who had been marriageable for the last year.

Mademoiselle de Watteville, feeling some little emotion of pride in thinking of the success of her kiosk, now regarded herself as possessing a decided superiority over all those about her. No one imagined that a girl, hitherto thought silly and with no mind at all, had produced this result from a wish to see into the study of Monsieur Albert Savaron.

The brilliant speech of the lawyer on behalf of the

Chapter of the cathedral was forgotten all the sooner because it roused the jealousy of the other lawyers. Besides which, faithful to his desire for seclusion, Savaron went nowhere and was never seen. Without friends to proclaim him, and visiting no one, he increased the chances of oblivion which in a town like Besançon abound for strangers. He did, however, argue three times before the court of commerce in knotty cases which were likely to be carried to the upper court. In one, his clients were four of the wealthiest merchants of the place, who recognized his sound sense and what the provinces call "judicial mind," and trusted him with all their litigations.

The day on which the Wattevilles inaugurated their kiosk Savaron raised a monument to himself in his own way. He founded a fortnightly review which he called the "Revue de l'Est," thanks to the support of the above-named merchants and their friends, and on the strength of forty shares taken at five hundred francs apiece, the money being placed in the hands of the first ten subscribers whom he had induced to take this step with a view of benefiting the future of Besançon, — a town which should be made the chief stopping-place between Mulhausen and the Rhone. To rival Strasburg, he said, Besançon ought to be as much a centre of intelligence as of commerce. A periodical was the only means of openly discussing

the important questions relating to the interests of the East. What glory it would be to snatch from Strasburg and Dijon their literary influence, to enlighten the East of France, and to emulate Parisian centralization. These considerations suggested by Albert were put forth by his ten shareholders as their own.

Savaron did not commit the blunder of putting his own name to the enterprise. He left the financial management to his first client, Monsieur Boucher, who was connected through his wife with one of the leading publishers of ecclesiastical literature; but he held the editing in his own hands, together with a share in the business as its originator. The management called for the assistance of all the adjacent towns, Dôle, Dijon, Salins, Neufchâtel, in the Jura, Bourg, Nantua, and Lons-le-Saulnier. Not only this, but they asked for the efforts and advice of all studious men in the three provinces of Bugey, Bresse, and La Comté. Five hundred subscribers were obtained in consequence of the low price of the review, — only eight francs quarterly. To avoid wounding provincial susceptibilities by the refusal of articles, Savaron had the wit to make the eldest son of the business manager, Monsieur Boucher, desire the place of literary director. This young man, who was only twenty-two and eager for fame, knew nothing as yet of the pitfalls or the annoyances of literary management. Nevertheless, Savaron secretly held the reins, and

Alfred Boucher was really his subordinate. Alfred was the only person in Besançon with whom the hero of the bar became familiar. Young Boucher called daily to confer with him as he walked round the garden in the morning. It is needless to say that the initial number of the review contained a "Meditation" by Alfred, which elicited Savaron's approval. In his conversations with Alfred, Albert let drop fine ideas and subjects for articles, by which young Boucher profited; he felt he had a mine to work in the great man, for to him Albert was a man of genius and a profound statesman. The merchants, delighted with the success of their review, were not obliged to deposit more than three tenths of their shares. Two hundred more subscribers and the enterprise would pay five per cent to its stockholders; for no salary was paid to the editor — his services, in fact, could not be compensated in money.

By the third number the Review had obtained exchanges with nearly all the French newspapers, which Albert could then read in his own home. This third number contained a novel signed "A. S.," and attributed to the lawyer himself. Notwithstanding the very slight attention which the highest society in Besançon accorded to this review, which was accused of liberalism, some one happened to mention at Madame de Chavoncourt's, one evening in midwinter, that it

contained the first novel ever brought out in La Comté.

"Papa," said Rosalie the next day, "there is a review published in Besançon; you ought to subscribe to it. Keep it in your own room, for mamma would not let me read it; but you will lend it to me."

Anxious to please his dear Rosalie, who for the last five months had given him many proofs of filial tenderness, Monsieur de Watteville went himself to subscribe for the "Revue de l'Est," and lent the first four numbers to his daughter. During the night Rosalie devoured the novel, the first she had ever read in her life — but she felt that she had never lived until within the last few months. We must therefore not judge of the effect the tale produced on her by any ordinary principles. Without prejudging either way the merits of this production from the pen of a Parisian who brought into the provinces the manner, and, if you choose, the brilliancy of the new school of writers, it could not fail to seem a masterpiece to a young girl applying her virgin mind and a pure heart to the study of a first work of this kind. Besides, from something she had heard, an intuition, an idea, had come to her, which greatly enhanced in her eyes the value of this novel. She expected to find the sentiments and perhaps something of the life of Albert himself in it. This expectation was so fully confirmed from the very first pages that

after reading the whole fragment she felt certain she was not mistaken.

Here follows the tale in which, according to the critics of the salon Chavoncourt, Albert had imitated certain modern writers, who, for want of invention, relate their own joys and sorrows and the mysterious events of their personal lives.

II.

AMBITIOUS THROUGH LOVE.

In 1823 two young men who had planned a journey through Switzerland started from Lucerne one fine morning in the month of July in a boat with three rowers. They were going to Fluelen, intending to stop on the way at all the points of interest on the Lake of the Four-Cantons. The various landscapes which from Lucerne to Fluelen surround the water offer every combination of beauty which the most exacting imagination can demand of mountains, rivers, rocks or rivulets, verdure, trees, and torrents. Here, stern solitude and graceful promontories, smiling and coquettish country-places; there, forests hanging like a plume from the vertical granite, lonely and refreshing inlets opening into valleys, the treasures of which seem enhanced by the dreamy distance.

As they passed before the charming village of Gersau, one of the two friends looked long at a wooden house lately built, inclosed by a palisade, standing on a promontory and almost bathed by the lake. As the boat passed it, a woman's head was lifted in the inte-

rior of a room on the upper story of the house, as if to enjoy the sight of a boat upon the lake. One of the young men received the glance carelessly cast by the unknown woman.

"Let us stop here," he said to his friend; "we intended to make Lucerne the headquarters for our excursions about Switzerland. You will not mind, Léopold, if I change my mind and remain here in charge of the portmanteaus? You can make the trips alone; as for me, I shall stay here. Boatmen, put us ashore at the village; we shall breakfast there. I will go back to Lucerne and fetch our bags and baggage," he continued, "and you shall know before you go further the house I lodge in, where you will find me on your return."

"Here or at Lucerne," said Léopold, "there is so little difference I won't hinder you from following a caprice."

The two young men were friends in the true acceptation of the word. They were of the same age, they had gone to the same college; after finishing their law-studies, they were now employing their vacation in the classic journey through Switzerland. By his father's efforts and will, Léopold was already promised the practice of a notary in Paris. His upright nature, his gentleness, the calmness of his senses, and his intelligence guaranteed his acquiescence in his father's wish.

He saw himself a notary; his life lay before him like one of those straight roads which cross the plains of France; he viewed it to its full extent with a resignation that was full of philosophy.

The character of his companion, whom we shall call Rodolphe, presented a contrast to his own, which no doubt strengthened the tie that united them. Rodolphe was the natural son of a great seigneur, who was overtaken by sudden death before he could make proper provision for a woman whom he tenderly loved and for his son. Thus betrayed by fate, Rodolphe's mother had recourse to heroic measures. She sold all she had received from the father of her child for about one hundred thousand francs or rather more, and bought with this sum an annuity for her life at a heavy rate; thus obtaining an income of some fifteen thousand francs. She determined to devote all to the education of her son, in order to give him the personal advantages that would enable him to make his own way in life, and she also resolved to lay by yearly enough to give him a small capital when he reached his majority. It was a bold measure; it was counting on her own life; but without this courage it would have been impossible for the good mother to live and properly educate her son, her only hope, her future, the sole source to her of happiness. Born of a charming Parisian woman and a man distinguished among the Brabantian nobility, the

fruit of a mutual passion, Rodolphe was afflicted with extreme sensibility. From his infancy he had shown excessive ardor in everything. In him, desires had supreme force and were the motive of his whole being, the stimulus of his imagination, the reason of his actions. Notwithstanding the efforts of an intelligent mother, who was frightened when she perceived these tendencies, Rodolphe desired as a poet imagines, as the man of science calculates, as a painter sketches, as a musician modulates his melodies. Tender, like his mother, he rushed violently in thought towards the object wished for; he annihilated time; while dreaming of the accomplishment of his wishes he suppressed all thought of the means of execution. "When my son has children," said his mother, "he will expect them to be grown-up at once." This fine ardor, carefully directed, enabled Rodolphe to study with brilliant results, and to become what the English call "a perfect gentleman." His mother was proud of him, all the while fearing some catastrophe if a passion should ever fasten upon that heart so tender and so sensitive, so violent and so kind. Therefore the prudent woman had encouraged the friendship that bound Léopold to Rodolphe and Rodolphe to Léopold; seeing as she did in the calm and faithful notary a guardian and a confidential friend who might to some extent replace her should she unhappily be called away. She was still

beautiful at forty-five years of age, and Léopold felt for her an ardent attachment, which drew the young men still closer together.

Léopold, who knew Rodolphe well, was not surprised to find him, as the result of a single glance cast upon a certain house, resolved on stopping short at Gersau and relinquishing their projected excursion to the Saint-Gotthard. While breakfast was being prepared for them at the little inn of La Cygne, the two friends walked about the village, and reached the neighborhood of the new house, where, by loitering about and talking with the inhabitants, Rodolphe discovered a neighboring house, the owners of which were willing to take him to board, according to a prevailing custom in Switzerland. They offered him a room looking on the water and the mountains, from which could be seen one of those magnificent sweeps of the lake of the Four-Cantons which are the admiration of all travellers. This house was divided by a small square and a little wharf from the new house where Rodolphe had seen the face of his beautiful unknown.

For one hundred francs a month Rodolphe was to have no thought about the necessaries of life. But, in consideration of the outlays required, the Stopfers, who owned the house, required him to pay the third month in advance. Rub a Swiss, and you will find a usurer. Breakfast over, Rodolphe installed himself at once

bringing to his room all the effects he was taking for his excursion to the Saint-Gotthard, after which he saw Léopold off on the trip which, in obedience to the arranged plan, the latter now took for himself and his friend. When Rodolphe, sitting on a rock that had rolled to the shore, could no longer see the boat which carried Léopold, he began to examine furtively the new house, in hopes of catching sight of the lady. Alas! he was compelled to return home without detecting any signs of life. At dinner-time he asked Monsieur and Madame Stopfer about the environs, and ended by learning all he wanted to know, thanks to the loquacity of his hosts, who were ready, without being asked, to empty their bag of gossip.

The unknown lady was called Miss Fanny Lovelace. This name belongs to an old English family, though Richardson used it for a creation which has dwarfed all its other distinctions. Miss Lovelace was living on the lake for her father's health; the physicians had ordered him to the canton of Lucerne. They had arrived without any servant excepting a little girl of fourteen, a mute, who was much attached to Miss Fanny, on whom she waited intelligently. The Lovelaces had hired their apartment the winter before from Monsieur and Madame Bergmann, — the husband formerly head-gardener to his Excellency Comte Borromeo at Isola Bella and Isola Madre on the Lago Maggiore. These

people, who were well-to-do, had let the upper part of their house to the Lovelaces for two hundred francs a year for two years. Old Mr. Lovelace, an octogenarian, and very feeble, — too poor to incur certain expenses, — seldom went out. His daughter supported him by translating English works and writing books herself, so it was said. The Lovelaces never allowed themselves to hire boats on the lake, nor horses, nor guides to show them the environs. A poverty which compels such privations excites the compassion of the Swiss all the more because it touches their source of gain. The Bergmann's cook fed the three English people for one hundred francs a month, everything included. But it was believed throughout Gersau that the Bergmanns, in spite of their pretensions to belong to the bourgeoisie, were really hidden under the name of their cook and took the profits for themselves. The former gardener and his wife had made beautiful gardens around their place, and a fine greenhouse. The flowers, the fruits, and the rare botanical treasures, had determined Miss Lovelace to choose that house when she first came to Gersau. She was said to be nineteen years old, — the last child of the old man, who idolized her. About two months ago she sent to Lucerne for a piano; she was infatuated about music.

"She loves flowers and music," thought Rodolphe, "and not married — what happiness!"

The next day Rodolphe asked permission to look at the greenhouse and walk round the gardens, which were beginning to have a public celebrity. The permission was not given immediately; the old gardener, strangely enough, requested to see Rodolphe's passport, which was sent over at once. The passport was brought back the next day by the cook, who informed him that her master and mistress would be pleased to show him their establishment. Rodolphe did not go to the house without a certain quivering of the flesh known only to persons of keen susceptibilities, who develop in a moment as many emotions as some other men put into their whole lives. Dressed with care to impress the gardeners, — for he saw in them the guardians of his treasure, — he walked about the gardens, looking now and then at the house, though cautiously, for the two owners evidently regarded him with distrust. His attention was soon excited by the little dumb girl, whom his natural sagacity, though still immature, made him recognize at once as Moorish, or, at any rate, Sicilian. The girl had the golden brown skin of an Havana cigar, eyes of fire, Armenian eyelids with lashes of a length that was wholly un-Britannic; hair that was more than black, and beneath that olive skin nerves of extraordinary strength and feverish excitability. She cast inquisitorial glances, of startling boldness, at Rodolphe, and watched his every movement.

"To whom does that little Moor belong?" he asked of the worthy Madame Bergmann.

"To the English people," replied Monsieur Bergmann.

"She was never born in England."

"Perhaps they brought her from the Indies," said Madame Bergmann.

"They tell me Miss Lovelace is fond of music; I should be enchanted if, during my stay at the lake which is ordered by my physician, she would allow me to play or sing with her."

"They neither receive nor wish to know any one," said the old gardener.

Rodolphe bit his lips, and left the gardens, without having been invited to enter the house, nor shown over that part of the garden which lay between the front of the house and the lake. On this side the house had a wooden gallery above the first floor, covered by a roof which projected far, like the roof of a châlet, and went round the four sides of the house in the Swiss fashion. Rodolphe had praised this convenient construction, and remarked on the beauty of the view from the gallery; but all in vain. When he had bowed to the Bergmanns and departed he felt a fool in his own eyes, like any other man of mind and imagination balked by the ill-success of a plan on which he had counted.

That evening he went out in a boat on the lake,

skirted the promontory, and rowed as far as Brünnen and Schwitz, returning at dusk. From afar he could see *her* window, open and brilliantly lighted, and he could hear the sound of a piano and the tones of a delightful voice. He stopped the boatman, that he might yield himself wholly up to the charm of listening to an Italian air divinely sung. When the song ceased, Rodolphe landed on the promontory and sent away the boat and the two boatmen. At the risk of wetting his feet, he sat down on the granite wall worn by the water, behind which was a thick hedge of the thorny acacia, flanked on its other side by a long avenue of young lindens, which ran the whole length of the Bergmanns' garden. After an hour's waiting he heard persons walking and talking just above him, but the words which reached his ear were Italian, spoken by two young female voices. He profited by the moment when the pair reached the extremity of the path to force his way to the other end of it without noise. After much effort he succeeded, and took up a position where, without being perceived or heard, he could see the two women as they came towards him.

What was Rodolphe's astonishment to find the dumb girl one of the two women. She was speaking Italian with Miss Lovelace! It was eleven o'clock at night. The stillness was so perfect upon the lake and around the house that the women must have felt themselves in

safety; in all Gersau there were no eyes open but theirs. Rodolphe thought the pretended dumbness of the little girl might be some necessary precaution. By the way they spoke Italian he was convinced it was the mother-tongue of both of them, and he concluded that the fiction of their being English covered some purpose.

"They are Italian refugees," he thought, "exiles who fear the police of Austria or Sardinia. The young girl waits for night to take her exercise and to talk in safety."

He lay down beside the hedge and crawled like a snake till he could force a passage between the stems of the acacias. At the risk of leaving his coat on the thorns and inflicting serious wounds on his back he crept through the hedge just as the pretended English girl and her pretended dumb attendant were at the other end of the alley. Then when they turned and came within twenty feet of him without seeing him (for he was in the shadow of the hedge, against which the moon was shining brightly) he suddenly rose to his feet.

"Fear nothing," said Rodolphe in French to the one called Miss Lovelace. "I am not a spy. You are refugees; I have guessed it. I am a Frenchman, held at Gersau by one look out of your eyes."

He suddenly felt a sharp pain from some instrument which stabbed his side, and he fell to the ground.

"Nel lago!" cried the terrible dumb girl.

"Ah, Gina!" exclaimed her mistress.

"She missed me," said Rodolphe, pulling the stiletto from the wound, where it had merely struck the ribs; "a little higher and it would have reached my heart. I did wrong, Francesca," he said using the name he had heard the little girl pronounce. "I am not angry with her; do not blame her; the happiness of speaking to you is cheaply earned with a stab like this — but show me the way out, I must get back to the Stopfers' house. Don't be afraid, I will not say a word about it."

Francesca, recovering from her astonishment, helped Rodolphe to rise, and said a few words to Gina which filled her eyes with tears. The two women forced Rodolphe to sit down on a bench and take off his coat, waistcoat, and cravat. Gina opened his shirt and sucked the wound. Francesca, who had left them, returned with a large piece of plaster with which she strapped the wound.

"You will be able to get home now," she said.

They each took an arm and led Rodolphe to a little gate in the garden, the key of which Francesca produced from the pocket of her apron.

"Does Gina speak French?" said Rodolphe to Francesca.

"No. But don't excite yourself," said Francesca, with an impatient little air.

"Let me see you," replied Rodolphe; "because it may be long before I can come again —"

He leaned against one of the gate-posts and looked at the beautiful Italian, who allowed him to do so for an instant amid the stillest silence and the finest night that ever beautified that lake, the monarch of all Swiss lakes. Francesca was indeed a classical Italian, and all that the imagination expects, waking or dreaming, that an Italian woman should be. The first thing that struck Rodolphe was the elegance and grace of her figure, the vigor of which was quite apparent in spite of her slender appearance, so supple was she. An amber paleness which overspread her face told of the sudden excitement she had felt, but it did not conflict with the glow of the liquid eyes, which were black and tender. Two hands — the most beautiful hands that ever a Greek sculptor attached to the polished arms of a statue — held Rodolphe's arm, and their white contrasted with the dark color of his coat. He only caught a glimpse of the rather long oval of her face, with its grieved mouth showing the dazzling teeth between full lips that were fresh and rosy. The beauty of the lines of the face guaranteed to Francesca the continuance of her splendor; but what struck Rodolphe more than anything was the adorable ease and freedom, the Italian frankness of this woman, who yielded herself wholly to the impulse of her compassion.

Francesca said a word to Gina, who gave an arm to Rodolphe and led him to the Stopfers' house; once there, she rang the bell and fled away like a swallow.

"These patriots strike home," thought Rodolphe, beginning to feel his sufferings when he was alone and in his bed. "'Nel lago!' Gina would have flung me into the lake with a stone round my neck!"

Early next morning he sent to Lucerne for the best surgeon, and when he came swore him to secrecy on the ground that his honor required it. Léopold got back from his excursion on the day his friend left his bed. Rodolphe invented a tale and sent him to Lucerne to fetch their baggage and letters. Léopold returned with fatal news; Rodolphe's mother was dead. While the two friends were travelling from Bâle to Lucerne the mournful tidings were written by Léopold's father, and reached Lucerne on the day they started for Fluelen. In spite of all Léopold's precautions Rodolphe was seized with a nervous fever. As soon as the future notary saw his friend out of danger, he started for France, furnished with a power of attorney. Rodolphe could thus remain at Gersau, the only spot where his grief might be soothed. The situation of the young Frenchman, his illness, his despair, and the circumstances which made the loss so much worse for him than for many others, became known and won for him the compassion and interest of all Gersau. Every

morning the so-called dumb girl came to see the Frenchman and carry news of him to her mistress.

When Rodolphe was able to go out he went to the Bergmanns' house to thank Miss Fanny Lovelace and her father for the interest they had shown in his illness and sorrow. For the first time since the old Italian had come to live at the Bergmanns' he allowed a stranger to enter his abode, where Rodolphe was now received with a cordiality due to his misfortunes and the fact that he was a Frenchman, which excluded all distrust of his motives. Francesca was so beautiful that evening by candlelight that a ray of brightness entered his despondent heart. Her smiles were the roses of hope cast on his mourning. She sang, not lively airs, but grave, sublime melodies in harmony with Rodolphe's state of mind; and this kind care he noticed. Towards eight o'clock the old man left the two young people together, without any appearance of distrust, and went to his own room. When Francesca was tired of singing she took Rodolphe to the outer gallery, before which lay the glorious panorama of the lake, and made him a sign to sit beside her on a rustic wooden seat.

"Is there any indiscretion in asking your age, *cara* Francesca?" said the young man.

"Nineteen," she said, "my last birthday."

"If anything in the world could lessen my grief," he said, "it would be to obtain you from your father,

in whatever position in life you may be. Beautiful as you are, you seem to me of more worth than the daughters of princes; therefore I tremble in making this avowal of the feelings you have inspired in me. But they are deep, — they are eternal."

"Hush!" said Francesca, laying a finger of her right hand on her lips; "say no more; I am not free; I am married — for the last three years."

A deep silence ensued for the next few minutes. When the Italian, frightened by Rodolphe's attitude, looked closely at him, she saw that he had fainted.

"Povero!" she said, "and I thought him cold!"

She went to fetch some salts, which revived him.

"Married!" he said, looking at Francesca, and the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Child!" she said, smiling, "there is hope. My husband is —"

"Eighty!" cried Rodolphe.

"No," she answered, laughing, — "sixty-five. He pretends to be old to mislead the police."

"Dear Francesca," said Rodolphe, "a few more such emotions and they would kill me. Twenty years' knowledge of me would not show you the strength and power of my heart, nor the nature of my aspirations towards happiness. That plant" — pointing to a Virginia jessamine which was climbing the balustrade — "does not stretch upward with more eagerness to blos-

som in the sunshine than I to you during this last month. I love you with a love unlike all other love. It will be forever the secret mainspring of my being — I may even die of it!"

"Oh, Frenchman, Frenchman!" she exclaimed, pointing her exclamation with a little pout of incredulity."

"I will wait for you, and win you from the hand of Time," he said, gravely. "But know this; if you are sincere in the expression that has just escaped you, I will wait for you faithfully, and never shall another sentiment enter my heart."

She looked at him doubtingly.

"None — not the merest fancy," he went on. "I have my way to make in the world; a noble fortune must be yours, — nature has created you a princess —"

Francesca could not restrain the flicker of a smile, which gave a ravishing expression to her face, — a look of delicate and sensitive meaning, such as the grand Leonardo has given to his Gioconda. That smile made Rodolphe pause.

"Yes," he resumed, "you must have suffered deeply from the privations of exile. Ah! if you are willing to make me the happiest of men and sanctify my love, treat me as a friend — let me *be* your friend. My poor mother has left me sixty thousand francs of her savings — take half."

Francesca looked at him fixedly. That piercing look went to the bottom of his soul.

"We want for nothing; my work is enough for all our needs," she answered in a grave voice.

"I cannot endure that you should work!" he cried. "Some day you will return to your own country, and recover what you have left there —"

Again the young Italian looked at him.

"And you can pay me all you deign to borrow," he added, with a look full of delicacy.

"Let us change the subject," she said, with an incomparable dignity of look and manner and gesture. "Make yourself a brilliant career; be one of the remarkable men of your country; I wish it. Fame is a drawbridge by which to cross a gulf. Be ambitious; you must be. I believe you have high and powerful faculties. But — employ them more for the benefit of humanity than to win me: you will seem the greater in my eyes."

In this conversation, which lasted two hours, Rodolphe discovered in Francesca that enthusiasm for liberal ideas and the worship of liberty which made the triple revolution of Naples, Piedmont, and Spain. When he left her, Gina conducted him to the gate. It was eleven o'clock; no one was stirring in the village, and no inquisitive eyes were to be feared. Rodolphe drew Gina into a corner and said, in a low voice and

bad Italian: "Who are your masters, my child? Tell me, and I will give you this new bit of gold."

"Monsieur," said the child, taking the money, "my master is the famous bookseller Lamporani of Milan, one of the heads of the revolution, — a conspirator whom Austria wants to put in the Spielberg."

"Wife of a bookseller!" thought Rodolphe. "So much the better; then we are equals. "What family does your mistress come from?" he asked aloud; "she has the manner of a queen."

"All Italian women are like that," replied Gina, proudly; "her father's name is Colonna."

Emboldened by Francesca's humble station in life, Rodolphe ordered cushions and an awning for his boat. When these were ready he asked Francesca to go out with him on the lake. She accepted at once, perhaps to keep up her part as a young English lady in the eyes of the villagers; but she took Gina with her. Every action of Francesca Colonna bore the signs of a superior education and of the highest social rank. Even the manner in which she took her seat at the stern of the boat made Rodolphe feel in some sort separated from her; and in presence of that proud consciousness of nobility his premeditated familiarity vanished. By a mere look Francesca made herself a princess, with all the privileges she might have enjoyed in the middle-ages. She seemed to have guessed the secret thoughts of the

vassal who had had the boldness to make himself her protector. Already, in the arrangement of the salon where Francesca had received him, in her dress, in the little articles she used, Rodolphe had noticed the signs of a fastidious nature and great wealth. All these observations returned to his mind, and he became thoughtful, after being, as it were, repulsed by Francesca's dignity. Gina, who was scarcely more than a child, seemed to have a mocking expression as she glanced sideways or beneath her eyelids at Rodolphe. This visible discrepancy between the position of the Italian and her manners was a new enigma to Rodolphe, who began to suspect Gina of another trick like that of her false dumbness.

"Which way will you go, *Signora Lamporani?*" he asked.

"Towards Lucerne," replied Francesca in French.

"At any rate," thought Rodolphe, "she is not surprised to hear me call her by name; she must know that I questioned that sly Gina. "Have you anything against me?" he asked, sitting down at last beside her, and offering to take her hand, which Francesca drew back. "You are cold and ceremonious; what we call in conversation *cutting*."

"Very true," she replied, smiling. "I am to blame. It is not right. It is bourgeois. I had much better explain myself than suffer cold or hostile feelings to

grow up against a friend — for you have proved your friendship for me. Perhaps I have gone too far with you. You must have taken me for an ordinary woman." Rodolphe made sign after sign of denial. "Yes," said the bookseller's wife, paying no attention to the pantomime which she saw plainly, "I perceived it, and I change my course, naturally. I shall end all this with a few words that are profoundly true. I wish you to understand me, Rodolphe; I have in me the strength to extinguish a feeling which would not be in harmony with the ideas or the intuitions that I have of true love. I could love as we love in Italy, but I know my duty; no infatuation could make me forget it. I was married without my consent to that poor old man, and I am at liberty to use the freedom he so generously gives me; but three years of married life have made me accept the conjugal yoke. Nothing, not the most ardent passion, could ever make me express, even involuntarily, a desire for freedom. Emilio knows my character. He knows that, excepting my heart, which is mine to dispose of as I please, I will never let any one so much as take my hand. That is why I refused it to you just now. I wish to be loved, to be waited for with fidelity, nobleness of heart, ardor, with no return but an infinite tenderness, the expression of which will never go farther than the words of my heart, where it has the right to live. If all this can be thoroughly

understood — oh then!" she cried with a girlish gesture, "I will be smiling and coquettish and gay as a child which knows no danger."

This plain declaration, made so frankly, was said with a tone, an accent, a look, which gave it the impress of the deepest truth.

"A Princess Colonna could not make known her wishes better," said Rodolphe, smiling.

"Is that," she said haughtily, "a slur upon the humbleness of my birth? Must you have a coat-of-arms for your love? The noblest names are over the shops in Milan, — Sforza, Canova, Visconti, Trivulzio, Ursini; there's an apothecary named Archinto. But you may indeed believe, in spite of my position as a shopkeeper's wife, that I have the sentiments of a duchess."

"A slur? no, madame, I meant to praise you."

"By a comparison?" she said, quickly.

"Ah! believe," he cried, "and torture me no more. If my words should ill-express my feelings, believe that my love is absolute, and carries with it obedience and infinite respect."

She bowed her head as if satisfied and said: "Then you accept the treaty?"

"Yes," he said. "I can understand how in the rich and powerful organization of a woman the faculty of loving can never be lost, but, through delicacy of

conscience, you restrain it. Ah! Francesca, a mutual tenderness, at my age and with a woman so sublimely, royally beautiful — why, that is the crown of all desires! To love you as you wish to be loved — is not that to preserve a young man from every folly? does not that mean using all his powers in a noble passion of which they may both be proud some day — a love which can give none but glorious memories? Ah! if you did but know with what colors, what poesy you invest that high Pilatus, that Rigi, this magnificent lake — "

"I wish to know it," she said, with the Italian naïveté which is always tinged with a little guile.

"Well, know it then! this hour will shine upon my life forever as a diamond on the brow of a queen."

For all answer Francesca laid her hand on his.

"Oh dearest, forever dear," he cried, "tell me, have you ever loved?"

"Never."

"And you will let me love you nobly, awaiting the future from heaven?" he asked.

She bowed her head gently. Two heavy tears fell from Rodolphe's eyes.

"What pains you?" she said quickly, laying aside her imperial manner.

"Would that my mother were here to see that I am happy; she has left this earth without knowing that which would have comforted her last hours."

"Knowing what?" she asked.

"That her tenderness was replaced by another equal to it."

"Povero mio!" said the Italian, much moved. Then, after a pause, she added: "It is, believe me, a very tender thing and a very constraining influence to fidelity, for a woman to know herself the all on earth to one she loves, to know he is alone, without family, without any thought in his heart except his love, which is hers only."

When two hearts thus understand each other a delightful stillness fills them, a divine tranquillity. Certainty is the basis which all sentiments desire; a basis never lacking to religious feeling; man is certain of his reward from God. Human love knows that its only security lies in its likeness to the divine love. A man must have deeply experienced these delights to understand the joy of this moment — always the only one of its kind in life; it returns, alas! no more than the emotions of our youth return. To believe in a woman; to make her his earthly religion, the essence of his being, the secret light upon his every thought! — is not that to be born again? A young man mingles this love with the feeling he has had for his mother.

Rodolphe and Francesca were silent for a long time, answering each other mutely with friendly looks that were full of thoughts. They understood each in the

midst of that most lovely scene of Nature, the glories of which, explained by those of their own hearts, helped them to engrave upon their memory the fleeting impression of that sole, irreplaceable moment of their lives. In Francesca's conduct there was not the faintest trace of coquetry. All was noble, grand, without one lesser thought. The grandeur keenly affected Rodolphe, who recognized therein the difference that distinguishes the Italian woman from the Frenchwoman. All things about him were grand and also tender, — the water, the earth, the sky, the woman, even their love in the midst of that vast picture rich in details, where the clear-cut lines of the snowy peaks resting upon the sky reminded Rodolphe of the conditions on which he possessed his happiness, — a rich land circled with snow.

This gentle intoxication of their souls was soon disturbed. A boat approached them, coming from Lucerne. Gina, who had been watching it for some time with deep attention, made a sudden gesture of joy, but was faithful to her rôle of dumbness. The boat came nearer; Francesca distinguished a face in it. "Tito!" she cried, recognizing a young man. She rose, and stood up in the boat, at the risk of losing her balance.

"Tito! Tito!" she cried, waving her handkerchief.

Tito gave an order to his men, and the two boats

ranged side by side. Francesca and the stranger then spoke to each other with such eagerness, and in a dialect so incomprehensible to a man who scarcely knew the Italian of books and had never been in Italy, that Rodolphe could neither understand nor guess the subject of conversation. Tito's beauty, Francesca's familiarity, Gina's look of joy, all distressed him. Besides, was there ever a lover who is not annoyed when he finds himself left for another person, no matter who that other may be? Tito threw a little leather bag to Gina, apparently full of gold, and he gave a package of letters to Francesca, who, with a sign of farewell to the young man, began at once to read them.

"Row back to Gersau," she said to the boatmen, adding, as if to herself, "I will not let my poor Emilio suffer five minutes longer than he need."

"What has happened?" asked Rodolphe, when she had read her last letter.

"La libertà!" she cried, enthusiastically.

"And money!" echoed Gina, who suddenly found her voice.

"Yes," said Francesca; "no more poverty! It is eleven months now that I have had to work, and I was beginning to be tired of it. Decidedly, I am not a literary woman."

"Who is that Tito?" asked Rodolphe.

"The secretary of the financial department of the

poor shop of the Colonnas," replied Francesca; "in other words, the son of our agent. Poor fellow! he could not come either by the Saint-Gothard, or the Mont Cenis, or the Simplon; he came by sea to Marseilles, and has crossed France. So now, in three weeks we shall be in Geneva, living at our ease! Why, Rodolphe," she said, noticing the sadness on the young man's face, "is n't the Lake of Geneva as fine as the Lake of the Four-Cantons?"

"May I not feel a regret for that delightful cottage of the Bergmanns?" said Rodolphe, pointing to the promontory.

"Come and dine with us, to multiply your recollections, povero mio," she said. "We 'll keep holiday to-day; there 's no longer any danger! My mother writes me that in another year, probably, we shall be amnestied. Oh, la cara patria!"

The words made Gina weep. "I should have died of another winter here," she said.

"Poor little Sicilian goat!" cried Francesca, passing her hand over Gina's head with a gesture of affection which made Rodolphe wish he might be thus caressed, even without love.

The boat reached the shore. Rodolphe jumped on the sand and held out his hand to Francesca, walked with her to the Bergmanns' gate, and then went home to dress for dinner.

On his return he found the bookseller and his wife sitting on the outer gallery, and could hardly repress an exclamation of surprise at the enormous change which the good news had wrought in the old man. He now beheld a man about sixty, perfectly preserved, a spare Italian, erect, with hair still black though scanty, and showing a white brow, keen eyes, a complete set of teeth, the face of Cæsar, in short, and on his diplomatic lips a smile that was rather sardonic, apparently the false smile under which a man of the world hides his real feelings.

"You see my husband in his natural guise," said Francesca, gravely.

"He is altogether a new acquaintance," replied Rodolphe, disconcerted.

"Altogether," said the bookseller. "I have played comedies in my time, and know how to disguise myself. Ah, I acted in Paris in the days of the empire with Bourrienne, Madame Murat, Madame d'Abrantès, *e tutti quanti*. Everything we take the trouble to learn in our youth, even foolish things, come to some use. If my wife had not had a man's education, in contradiction to Italian ideas, I should have had to be a woodchopper in order to live at all. Povera Francesca! who could have believed that she would one day support me?"

As Rodolphe listened to the worthy bookseller, so

easy, affable, and still vigorous, he felt certain there was some mystification, and he maintained the observing silence of a duped man.

"What is the matter, signor?" asked Francesca, naïvely. "Surely our happiness does not grieve you?"

"Your husband is a young man," he said in a low voice.

Her laugh was so frank, so communicative that Rodolphe was more than ever taken aback.

"He has only sixty-five years to offer you," she said; "but I assure you that is — quite reassuring."

"I do not like to have you jest about a love as sacred as mine, on which you have imposed your own conditions."

"Hush!" she said, glancing at her husband to see if he heard them. "Never trouble the peace of that dear man, open-hearted as a child, with whom I do as I will. He is," she added, "under my protection: If you knew with what nobleness of heart he has risked his life and fortune because I am liberal! for he does not share my political opinions. Is n't that loving, Monsieur le Français? But they are all so in his family. Emilio's younger brother was betrayed by the woman he loved, for a charming young man. He stabbed himself through the heart, and ten minutes before he did it, he said: 'I would kill my rival but it would grieve *her* too much.'"

This mixture of nobleness and merriment, of dignity and childlike playfulness, made Francesca at that moment the most fascinating creature in the world. The dinner, and the evening that followed it, were bright with the gayety which the good news warranted, but Rodolphe was saddened.

"Can it be that she is light-minded?" he said to himself, as he returned to the Stopfers' house. "She shared my grief, but I cannot share her joy."

He blamed himself, and justified the young girl.

"No, she has not a trace of hypocrisy in her; she gives way to her impressions," he thought; "and I am expecting her to be like a Parisian woman."

The next day and the following days, in fact for twenty days, Rodolphe passed all his time at the Bergmann's house, observing Francesca without allowing himself to think that he did so. The admiration of some minds does not exist without a certain element of penetration. The Frenchman saw in Francesca's youthful imprudence the candid nature of a woman who was still undisciplined, fighting against her love at some moments, at others yielding herself gladly up to it. The old man treated her as a father would a daughter, and Francesca showed him in return a profound gratitude which kept alive her feelings of instinctive honor. These circumstances and this woman presented an impenetrable enigma to Rodolphe, the study of which bound him to Francesca even more and more.

The last days they were together were filled with secret joys, mingled with sadness, dissensions, even quarrels that were more charming than the hours when Rodolphe and Francesca understood each other. The young man was more and more entranced by the simplicity of a guileless tenderness, consistent with itself in all things, a tenderness which showed itself — already! — in jealousy of mere nothings.

"You love luxury!" he said to her one evening when she was expressing her desire to leave Gersau where she was deprived of so much.

"I!" she exclaimed. "I love luxury as I love the arts, as I love a picture by Raffaelle, a fine horse, a beautiful day, or the bay of Naples — Emilio," she added, "have I ever complained of our poverty?"

"You would not have been yourself if you had done so," he answered gravely.

"After all," she said, with a mischievous glance at her husband and Rodolphe, "is n't it very natural that the middle classes should like grandeur? My feet," she added, stretching out two charming little feet, "were not made to be tired. My hands" — and she held one out to Rodolphe — "do you think they were made to work? Leave us now," she said to her husband. "I have something I want to say to him before we part."

The old man went back into the salon with charming amiability; he had perfect confidence in his wife.

"I do not wish," she said to Rodolphe, "that you should accompany us to Geneva. Geneva is a gossipping place. Though I am above the foolish nonsense of society, I do not intend to be talked about — not for myself, but for *him*. It is my pride to be his glory; he has been, after all, my sole protector. We leave to-morrow, and you must stay here several days longer. When you come to Geneva, call first on my husband, and let him present you to me. Let us hide our deep and unalterable affection from the eyes of the world. I love you, and you know it. I will prove it to you thus: never shall you find in my conduct anything, no matter what, which can excite your jealousy."

She drew him to a corner of the gallery, took his head between her hands, kissed him on the forehead and went away, leaving him stupefied.

The next day he heard that they had left at daybreak. Life at Gersau then became intolerable and he went to Vevey by the longest route, starting earlier than he ought to have done, so eager was he to be on the waters of the lake by which Francesca was awaiting him. He reached Geneva in the last week of October. Wishing to avoid the town itself, he took lodgings in a house at the Eaux-Vives, outside the ramparts. No sooner was he installed than he asked his landlord, an old jeweller, if some Italian refugees from Milan had lately settled in Geneva.

"Not that I know of," said the landlord. "The Prince and Princess Colonna from Rome have hired for three years the country-house of Monsieur Jeanrenaud, one of the most beautiful places on the lake. It stands between the villa Diodati and the country-house of Monsieur Lafin-de-Dieu, which the Vicomtesse de Beauséant has hired. Prince Colonna came there to meet his daughter and his son-in-law, Prince Gandolphini, a Neapolitan or, if you prefer it, a Sicilian, a former partisan of Murat and a victim of the last revolution. They are the last comers to Geneva, and they are not Milanese. I am told there were many negotiations, and it required all the influence of the Pope in behalf of the family of the Colonnas before a permit could be obtained from the King of Naples and the other powers enabling Prince and Princess Gandolphini to reside here. Geneva is always anxious not to displease the Holy-Alliance, to which she owes her independence. *Our* wisest plan is to cast no censure on the doings of foreign courts. There are many foreigners here, Russian and English."

"And a few Genevese?"

"Yes, monsieur. Our lake is so fine! Lord Byron lived seven years at the Villa Diodati, which all the world now goes to see, as it does Coppet and Ferney."

"Could you find out for me whether a bookseller and his wife from Milan, named Lamporani, have come

here during the last week; he was one of the leaders of the last revolution."

"I can ask at the Strangers' Club," said the landlord.

The first walk Rodolphe took was naturally to the Villa Diodati, the residence of Lord Byron, to which the recent death of the great poet lent a renewed charm — for is not death the chrism of genius? The road from Eaux-Vives skirts the lake, and is, like all the Swiss roads, rather narrow; in certain places it becomes, by the lay of the rising land, so contracted that two carriages can scarcely pass each other. A short distance before he came to the Jeanrenaud place, which he was approaching without being aware of it, Rodolphe heard the roll of a carriage behind him, and finding himself in a sort of gorge he sprang upon a ledge of rock to let the carriage pass. Naturally, he looked at it, — an elegant calèche drawn by two fine English horses. A sort of vertigo came over him as he saw Francesca, delightfully dressed, sitting in the carriage beside an old lady who was stiff as a cameo. A chasseur, glittering with gold lace, was behind the carriage. Francesca recognized Rodolphe, and smiled to see him standing like a statue on a pedestal. The carriage, which he followed with his eyes as it went up the hill, turned in at the gate of a country-seat, whither he hastened to follow it.

"Who lives here?" he said to a gardener.

"The Prince and Princess Colonna, also the Prince and Princess Gandolphini."

"Did they just drive in?"

"Yes, monsieur."

The veil fell from Rodolphe's eyes; he saw clearly into the past.

"If I could only be sure," he said, "that this is her last deception."

He dreaded lest he had been the plaything of a mere caprice; for he had heard others tell of what the *capriccio* of an Italian woman meant. But what a crime he had committed in the eyes of such a woman by taking her for a shopkeeper, a princess born a princess! by supposing for a moment that the daughter of one of the most illustrious houses of the middle ages was the wife of a bookseller! The thought of his blunder made Rodolphe all the more anxious to find out at once if he should be ignored and repulsed. He asked for Prince Gandolphini and sent in his card, and was immediately received by the pretended Lamporani, who came to meet him, greeted him with the perfect grace and affability of a Neapolitan, and took him out upon a terrace from which could be seen the whole panorama of Geneva, the Jura and its slopes covered with country-houses, and a broad stretch of the lake.

"My wife, you see, is faithful to lakes," he said,

after explaining the landscape to his guest. "We have a sort of concert this evening," he added, as they returned to the house. "I hope you can give the princess and myself the pleasure of seeing you there. Two months of companionship in poverty is equal to years of friendship."

Though devoured with curiosity Rodolphe did not dare ask to see the princess. He walked slowly back to the Eaux-Vives, thinking of the evening. In a few hours his love, immense as it was already, was enhanced by his anxiety and the expectation of events. He began to perceive the necessity of making himself a distinguished career before he could be, socially speaking, on a level with his idol. To his eyes Francesca now seemed lofty through the very simplicity and freedom of her conduct in Geneva. The stiff and haughty air of the Princess Colonna made him tremble with the fear that he should find enemies in the father and mother; at least he had every reason to think so, and the caution which Francesca had urged upon him now appeared only another proof of her tenderness. Was it not saying that she loved him, to be so anxious not to compromise the future?

At last nine o'clock struck. Rodolphe got into a carriage, and said, with an inward emotion that can readily be conceived, "To the Jeanrenaud place — Prince Gandolphini's."

He entered the salon, filled with strangers of the highest distinction, and was forced to stand with others in a group near the door, for a duo by Rossini was then being sung.

At last he saw Francesca, but without being seen by her. The princess was standing near the piano. Her beautiful hair, so long and abundant, was confined by a circlet of gold. Her face, lighted by the wax candles, was dazzling with the whiteness peculiar to Italian women, which presents its full effect only at night. She was in ball dress, which showed the fascinating shoulders, the girlish waist, the arms like those of an antique statue. Her glorious beauty was unrivalled, although there were charming English and Russian women present, also the prettiest women of Geneva and other Italians, among whom shone the illustrious Principessa di Varese and the famous singer Tinti, who was singing at the moment.

Rodolphe, leaning against the door-frame, looked at the princess with that fixed, persistent, magnetic gaze, charged with all the force of human will concentrated in the feeling called desire, which now took the form of violent command. Did the flame of that look touch Francesca? Or was she expecting every instant to see Rodolphe enter? At the end of a few moments her eyes turned to the door, as if drawn there by that current of love, and then, without hesitation, they plunged

into those of Rodolphe. A slight quiver stirred that magnificent face and beautiful body — the emotion of the soul reacted upon them. Francesca blushed. This exchange of looks, so rapid that it was only comparable to lightning, was like a lifetime to Rodolphe; but such happiness can be compared to nothing, — he was loved! The glorious princess had kept, there in the midst of her world, in the beautiful mansion she was inhabiting, the promise given by the poor exile, by the capricious girl of the lake cottage. The intoxication of such a moment makes a man a slave for life. A smile, gracious and significant, candid and triumphant, hovered on the lips of the princess, who, seeing that no one observed her, looked steadily at Rodolphe as if to beg his pardon for deceiving him as to her position.

The piece ended, Rodolphe was able to reach the prince, who at once took him up to his wife. The young man went through the ceremony of official presentation to the Prince and Princess Colonna and to Francesca. When it was over the latter was called upon to sing her part in the famous quartette *Mi manca la voce* which was taken by her, La Tinti, Genovese the celebrated tenor, and a well-known Italian prince, then in exile, whose voice, if he had not been a prince in his own right, would have made him one of the princes of art.

"Sit there," said Francesca to Rodolphe, giving him

her own chair. "Ah!" she added, with a long aspiration, "I think there must be a mistake in my name; I seem to be a Princess Rodolphini!"

The words were said with a light-heartedness and charm which reminded him of the happy gayety at Gersau. He now enjoyed the delightful sensation of listening to the voice of an adored woman, sitting close beside her so that the stuff of her dress and the gauze of her scarf almost touched his cheek; and when at such a moment the song is *Mi manca la voce*, sung by four of the finest voices in Italy, it is easy to understand why the tears moistened Rodolphe's eyes.

In love, as in all things else perhaps, there are certain facts, trivial in themselves, but the result of a thousand little antecedent circumstances, the bearing of which becomes immense when the past is summed up and connected with the present. We may have felt a thousand times all the worth of the one we love, but a sudden occurrence, the perfect unison of two souls, brought about by a walk together, by a word, by some unexpected *proof* of love, lifts the sentiment to its highest reach. To represent this moral fact by an image which from the earliest ages of the world has been incontestably admitted, in every long chain there are points of attachment where the cohesion is closer than in the circuit of the links. This recognition between Rodolphe and Francesca, during this concert,

in presence of all the world, was one of those powerful couplings which fasten the present to the past and bind forever to the heart a true attachment. Perhaps it was to such bonds as these that Bossuet referred when he spoke of the rare moments of human happiness, — he who loved so keenly and so secretly.

Next to the pleasure of admiring the woman we love, is that of seeing her admired by others. Rodolphe enjoyed them both. Love is the treasure-house of memory; and though that of Rodolphe was already amply filled, he kept on adding precious pearls, — smiles aside to him alone, stolen glances, inflections of her voice which Francesca found for him alone, making La Tinti pale with jealousy at the applause which followed them. Thus all the strength and power of desire — the will of his wishes — that special form of his soul, turned to the beautiful Roman woman, who became thenceforth and unalterably the source and the purpose of all his thoughts and actions. Rodolphe loved as every woman dreams of being loved, — with a force, a constancy, a tenacity which made Francesca the very fibre and substance of his heart; he felt her like a purer blood mingling with his blood, a more perfect soul entering his soul; he knew that thenceforth she would be forever beneath even his slightest efforts, as the golden sands of the Mediterranean lie beneath its waters. Every aspiration of his mind now possessed an active hope.

After some days had passed Francesca recognized the immensity of his love; but it was so natural, and so fully shared by her that she was not surprised by it — she was worthy of it.

"What is there so surprising," she said to Rodolphe one day, as they walked together along the garden terrace, after she had just detected in him one of those touches of self-conceit so natural to Frenchmen when they express their feelings, "in loving a young and handsome woman who is artist enough to make her living like La Tinti, and who can give a man some of the enjoyments of vanity? Where is the dullard who would n't be an Amadis under such circumstances? But this is not the point between you and me — *that* is to love with constancy, persistency, at a distance and though years of absence, with no other pleasure than to know ourselves beloved."

"Alas!" said Rodolphe, "will you not think my fidelity devoid of all reality when you see me absorbed in the pursuits of inordinate ambition? Do you think that I would suffer you some day to exchange the noble name of Princess Gandolphini for that of a man who is obscure? I must become one of the great men of my country; I must be rich, distinguished, so that you may be proud of my name, as you are of your own Colonna!"

"I should be sorry if you did not have such feelings

in your heart," she said with a charming smile. "But do not wear yourself out in the struggle of ambition; keep young. They say that politics make men prematurely old."

The rarest thing in woman is a certain gayety which does not lessen tenderness. This mixture of deep feeling and the light-heartedness of youth added infinite attraction to all the rest of Francesca's charm. In it lies the key-note of her character; she laughed and was tender; she could rise to heights and return to merriment with an ease, a simplicity, which made her the delightful and winsome creature whose charm is known beyond the confines of her own Italy. Behind these womanly graces she concealed a thorough education, due to the semi-monastic and extremely monotonous life she led in the old castle of the Colonnas. In her childhood she was destined for the cloister, being the fourth child of the Prince and Princess Colonna; but the death of two brothers and a sister drew her suddenly from retirement to become one of the greatest heiresses in the Roman States. Her elder sister had been betrothed to Prince Gandolphini, one of the largest landowners in Sicily. Francesca was given to him that no disarrangement might take place in the family affairs. The Colonnas and the Gandolphinis had long intermarried.

From the time she was nine years old until she was

sixteen, Francesca, under the instructions of a monsignore belonging to the family, had read the library of the Colonnas, to employ and train her ardent imagination in the study of science, art, and letters. But she acquired from these studies a taste for independence and liberal ideas which cast her, and her husband with her, into the Revolution. Rodolphe at this time had no idea that Francesca knew Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. The charming creature well understood that the first condition of a woman's education is that it shall be concealed.

Rodolphe remained the whole winter in Geneva. It passed like a day. When the spring came, and in spite of the exquisite enjoyment the companionship of a woman of mind, thoroughly informed, young, gay, and beautiful, gave him, he was conscious of cruel sufferings, borne courageously, though at times they showed in his face, in his bearing, in his words, — perhaps because he thought they were not shared. Sometimes he was irritated while admiring Francesca's calmness; for she appeared, like Englishwomen, to take a pride in showing nothing on her face, the serenity of which seemed to deny her love. Rodolphe would rather have seen her agitated; sometimes he accused her of want of feeling, in refutation of the common belief that Italian women are made up of feverish emotion.

"I am a Roman woman," she replied gravely one

day when she took up seriously the half-jesting remarks that Rodolphe made to her on this point.

There seemed a depth of meaning in the tone of this reply which gave it the effect of savage irony, and it made Rodolphe quiver. The month of May was displaying the treasures of its young verdure, the sun had moments of strength as though it were mid-summer. Francesca and Rodolphe were leaning on the stone balustrade which, at an angle of the terrace where it projects above the lake, tops the wall of a flight of steps at which the boats are taken. From the neighboring villa, where the place of embarkation is somewhat similar, a wherry darted forth like a swan, with its flag run up and a crimson awning spread, beneath which a charming woman reclined on crimson cushions, her hair wreathed with natural flowers, while a young man, dressed as a sailor, rowed the boat, with all the more grace because he was doing it under her eyes.

"They are happy!" said Rodolphe, in a bitter tone. "Claire de Bourgogne, the last of the only house that was ever able to rival the kings of France —"

"Oh! she comes of an illegitimate branch, illegitimate, moreover, through its women."

"At any rate, she is the Vicomtesse de Beauséant, and has not —"

'Hesitated — that is what you mean? — to bury

herself here with Monsieur Gaston de Nueil," said the daughter of the Colonnas. "She is only a Frenchwoman; I am an Italian, my dear friend."

Francesca left the balustrade, leaving Rodolphe still there, and went to the farther end of the terrace, from which an extensive view of the lake is obtained. Observing that she walked slowly, the suspicion entered Rodolphe's mind that he had wounded that spirit, so candid, so wise, so proud, and so humble. He turned cold, and followed Francesca, who made him a sign that she wished to be alone; but he paid no attention to the warning, for he saw her tears. Tears from a nature so strong as hers!

"Francesca," he said, taking her hand, "is there a single regret in your heart?"

She was silent, but withdrew her hand and took her handkerchief to wipe her eyes.

"Forgive me," he said, as with a sudden impulse he darted forwards to dry those eyes with a kiss.

Francesca did not notice the passionate movement, so deeply was she moved. Rodolphe, thinking she consented, grew bolder; he caught her by the waist, strained her to his heart, and kissed her; but she freed herself with a magnificent action of offended modesty. Standing back two steps, and looking at him without anger but resolutely, she said: "You will leave to-night. We shall not see each other again till we meet in Naples."

In spite of the severity of this order it was carried out, for Francesca willed it.

On his return to Paris Rodolphe found at his house a portrait of the Princess Gandolphini, painted by Schinner as Schinner alone knows how to paint a portrait. This artist had passed through Geneva on his way to Italy. As he had positively refused to paint a number of women, Rodolphe did not think that the prince, who was extremely anxious for a portrait of his wife, had vanquished the painter's reluctance. But Francesca, no doubt, captivated him, and obtained — what was really a prodigy of success — an original portrait for Rodolphe and a copy for Emilio. This was told to Rodolphe in a charming and delightful letter, in which the thoughts made up for the stiffness imposed by the religion of conventions. He answered it; and thus began, never to end, a correspondence between Rodolphe and Francesca which was the only pleasure they allowed themselves.

Rodolphe, in the grasp of an ambition sanctified by love, went to work. He wanted, in the first place, money; and he embarked on an enterprise into which he flung every power he possessed and all his capital. But he had to struggle, with the inexperience of youth, against a duplicity which, in the end, triumphed over him. Three years were lost in that great enterprise — three years of efforts and of courage.

The ministry of Villèle fell at the time of Rodolphe's

disaster. The dauntless lover then thought to obtain from public life what industrial enterprise denied him. But before casting himself into the tempests of that career he went — all bleeding and suffering, to heal his wounds and gain fresh courage — to Naples, where the Prince and Princess Gandolphini were now recalled and reinstated in their position by order of the King. In the midst of his struggle this was a time of refreshment, full of sweetness. He passed three months at the Villa Gandolphini, cradled in hope.

On his return to Paris Rodolphe began once more the edifice of his fortunes. Already his talents had made him known; he was about to realize the hopes of his ambition; a position of eminence was promised to him in return for his devotion and for services rendered to the government. At that moment the revolution of July, 1830, broke forth, and again his bark foundered.

She and God — they are the only witnesses of the bravest efforts, the boldest enterprises that a young man ever undertook, — a young man gifted with powers, but who, up to this time, has lacked the help of the god of fools, happiness! Yet this indefatigable athlete, sustained by Love, begins the conflict anew, inspired by a glance that is ever loving, by a heart that is ever true. All ye who love, pray for him!

III.

When Mademoiselle de Watteville finished reading this tale, her cheeks were on fire, fever was in her veins, and she wept — for rage. This novel, written in the style of the literature then in fashion, was the first of its kind which Rosalie had ever devoured. Love was described there, if not by the hand of a master, certainly by a man who seemed to be relating his own impressions of it. Now truth, however ill-presented, will always touch the virgin soul; and here lies the secret of Rosalie's agitation, her fever, her tears, — she was jealous of Francesca Colonna. The girl had no doubt whatever of the sincerity of this poem; she felt certain that Albert had found a personal pleasure in relating the outset of his passion, concealing no doubt the names, perhaps the localities. Rosalie was seized with an infernal curiosity. What woman would not have desired as she did to know the real name of her rival? For — she loved. Reading these pages, which were like a contagion to her, she said to herself the solemn words: "I love." She loved Albert; she felt

in her heart a burning desire to struggle for him, to tear him from this unknown rival. The thought came to her that she knew nothing of music and was not handsome.

"He will never love me," she said to herself.

That thought redoubled her desire to know if she was right, if Albert really loved an Italian princess, and if he were loved by her. During this fatal night the spirit of prompt decision which distinguished the famous Watteville displayed itself, to its fullest extent, in his descendant. She conceived those extravagant schemes round which the imaginations of young girls often revolve when, in the solitude to which some imprudent mothers condemn them, they are excited by an unexpected or stirring event which the system of repression to which they are subjected has neither foreseen nor prevented. She thought of descending by a ladder from the kiosk into Albert's garden, and taking advantage of his being asleep to look through his window and see the interior of his study. She thought of writing to him, of breaking the bonds of Besancian social life by introducing him into the salon of the hôtel de Rupt. This latter enterprise, which would have seemed the height of impossibility to the Abbé de Grancey himself, was clinched by a thought.

"Yes!" she said to herself, "there are claims against my father for part of his Rouxey property; I 'll go

there! If there is no lawsuit, I 'll bring one about, and then *he* will come to our house," she cried, springing from her bed to the window that she might see the bewitching light which illuminated *his* working hours. One o'clock struck; he was still asleep.

"I shall see him when he wakes; perhaps he will come to the window," she thought.

Just at that moment Mademoiselle de Watteville was witness of a little scene which placed in her hands the means of knowing Albert's secrets. By the light of the moon she saw two arms stretched from the kiosk, which were helping Jérôme, Albert's servant, to climb to the top of the wall and enter the arbor. In Jérôme's accomplice Rosalie at once recognized Mariette.

"Mariette and Jérôme!" she said to herself, "Mariette! such an ugly creature! they ought to be ashamed of themselves."

Though Mariette was in fact horribly ugly and thirty-six years old, she had inherited certain lots of land. For seventeen years she had been in the employ of Madame de Watteville, who valued her devotion, her honesty, and her long service; during this time she had economized and had no doubt invested her wages and her savings. Now, the laying by of ten louis a year, meant the possession, counting compound interest and her inherited land, of something like ten thousand francs. To Jérôme's eyes ten thousand francs changed

the laws of optics; he thought Mariette's figure pretty, and he failed to see the pits and seams that small-pox had left on her flat and skinny face; in his eyes the crooked mouth was straight, and ever since his service to the lawyer had brought him into the neighborhood of the hôtel de Rupt he had laid siege in form to the pious waiting-maid, who was quite as stiff and prudish as her mistress, and, like all ugly old maids, much more exacting than a pretty woman.

If the nocturnal scene in the kiosk is now explained to clear-sighted persons, it was far from being plain to Rosalie, who nevertheless obtained from it the most dangerous of all instructions, that of bad example. A mother brings up a daughter rigidly for seventeen years, and in one hour a servant-woman destroys that long and patient labor, sometimes by a word, often by a gesture. Rosalie went to bed again, not without thinking of the benefit she might obtain from her discovery.

The next morning, on her way to mass accompanied by Mariette (for Madame de Watteville was ill and unable to go out), Rosalie took her maid's arm, which greatly surprised the peasant-woman.

"Mariette," she said, "is Jérôme in his master's confidence?"

"I don't know, mademoiselle."

"Don't play the innocent with me," said Mademoiselle de Watteville dryly. "You let him kiss you

last night in the kiosk. I am no longer surprised that you took such interest in the improvements my mother has made in the garden."

Rosalie felt how Mariette trembled by the shaking of her arm.

"I don't wish you any harm," continued Rosalie. "You need n't be uneasy; I shall not say a word to my mother, and you can see Jérôme as much as you please."

"But, mademoiselle," said Mariette, "it is all proper. Jérôme means to marry me; he has no other thought."

"Then why do you let him come at night?"

Mariette, disconcerted, had no reply to make.

"Now listen, Mariette. I, too, love some one — in secret; no one knows it. After all, I am my father and mother's only child; therefore remember that you have more to expect from me than from any one else in the world."

"Certainly, mademoiselle, and you may count on me for life and death," cried Mariette, delighted at this unexpected turn of events.

"In the first place, silence for silence," went on Rosalie. "I don't wish to marry Monsieur de Soulas, but I do wish a certain thing. My good-will to you depends on it."

"What is it?" asked Mariette.

"I want to see the letters which Monsieur Savaron gives Jérôme to put in the post."

"What will you do with them?" asked Mariette, frightened.

"Oh, merely read them — you shall put them in the post yourself afterwards. It will only cause a little delay, that's all."

At that moment Mademoiselle de Watteville and Mariette entered the church, and each was occupied by her own reflections instead of attending to the Ordinary of the Mass.

"Good heavens! how many sins there are in it?" thought Mariette.

Rosalie, whose soul, head, and heart were completely upset by the reading of that novel, felt more and more certain it was a history written for the eyes of her rival. By dint of reflecting, as children do, perpetually on one thing, she ended by supposing that the "Revue de l'Est" must certainly be sent to the woman Albert loved.

"Oh!" she said to herself on her knees, her head in her hands in the attitude of a person absorbed in prayer, "oh, how can I get my father to examine the list of subscribers to whom they send the review?"

After breakfast she walked round the garden with her father, petting him, and finally led him into the kiosk.

"Don't you suppose, my dear little papa," she said, "that our Revue is sent to foreign countries?"

"Why it is only just beginning —"

"I am sure it is sent to foreigners."

"Not likely."

"Go and find out, and take the names of the foreign subscribers."

Two hours later Monsieur de Watteville said to his daughter: "I was right; there is not a single subscriber in foreign countries. They expect some from Berne, Neufchâtel, and Geneva. There is one copy sent to Italy, but that is done gratuitously, to a Milanese lady at her country-place at Belgirate on the Lago Maggiore."

"What 's her name?" said Rosalie quickly.

"The Duchesse d' Argaiolo."

"Do you know her, papa?"

"I have heard of her. She was born Princess Soderini. She is a Florentine, a very great lady and as rich as her husband, who has one of the largest fortunes in all Lombardy. Their villa on the Lago Maggiore is one of the sights of Italy."

Two days later Mariette brought the following letter to Mademoiselle de Watteville: —

"To Monsieur Léopold Hannequin.

"Besançon, November, 1834.

"You see, my dear friend, that I am at Besançon while you thought me travelling. I wished to tell you

nothing of my plans until success came to them — the dawn has come, at last! Yes, dear Léopold, after the failure of so many enterprises in which I spent my best heart's blood, my every effort, and used such courage, I have now resolved to do as you did, — take the beaten track, the high-road, the longest, the surest. I see you jump in your office-chair! But do not think there is any change in my inner life, in the secret hopes which are known to you alone, — and even so with the reserves which She exacted.

"The upshot of the first enterprise in which I put all my hopes, and which failed through the treachery of my partners who made common cause to rob me, — me, to whose activity they owed all, — made me renounce all schemes for pecuniary success, after losing three years of my life, one of which was consumed in law-suits. Perhaps I might have been worse off than I was if I had not been compelled to study law when I was twenty. I next resolved to enter political life, hoping to rise by degrees until I should some day be included among the elevations to the peerage under the title of Comte Albert Savaron de Savarus, and thus revive in France a noble name extinct in Belgium, although I am, as you know, neither legitimate nor legitimatized."

"Ah! I was sure of it," cried Rosalie, letting fall the letter, "he is noble!"

"You know what conscientious pains I took as a devoted, obscure, but useful journalist, and how faithfully I discharged the duties of secretary to that statesman who, up to 1829, was faithful to me. The revolution of 1830 threw me back to nothingness; and then, just as my name was beginning to shine, — at the very moment when as Master of petitions I was about to become a necessary part of the political engine, — I committed the blunder of remaining faithful to the vanquished side and fighting for their cause, with no help from them. Ah! why was I only thirty-three years old, and why did I not apply to you to make me eligible?

"I hid all my perils and my devoted efforts from you, and why? — because I had faith, and you would not have agreed with me. Ten months ago, when you saw me so gay, apparently so contented, writing my political articles, despair was in my heart. I was then thirty-seven years old, without a name, possessing two thousand francs for my whole fortune, and having just failed in a noble enterprise, a daily paper that spoke for the needs of the future and not to the passions of the moment. I knew not where to look, nor what course to take. I was beside myself. I wandered, gloomy and bleeding, through the solitary places of that Paris which had escaped me, thinking of my foiled ambitions, but never yielding them. Oh! what

letters of rage and madness have I not written to Her, my second conscience, my other self! Sometimes I thought: 'Why make so vast a scheme for life? why desire all things? why not await happiness, employing my days in some half-mechanical occupation?

"Thus thinking, I looked about me for some modest position by which I could live. I was just about to accept the place of manager of a newspaper under an editor who knew but little, a man ambitious only for money, when a species of terror seized me.

"'Would She accept as a husband a lover who had fallen so low?' I said to myself.

"This thought made me once more twenty-two years old. Oh! my dear Léopold, how the soul wears out under such perplexities. What the eagles must suffer in a cage! and the lions! They suffer as Napoleon suffered, not at St. Helena, but on the quai of the Tuileries, August the tenth, when he saw Louis XVI. defending himself so foolishly, — he who could have quelled the sedition, as he did later on the same spot in Vendémiaire. Well, my life has had the equal of that one day's suffering spread over every day for four long years. How many speeches before the Chamber have I not uttered aloud as I walked the lonely paths of the Bois de Boulogne! That wasted eloquence did at least unlimber my tongue and accustom my mind to formulate its thought in words. While I was thus

being tortured you were married, you paid off the cost of your practice, became assistant-mayor of your arrondissement, and won the cross of the Legion of honor for your wound at Saint-Merri.

"When I was a child and teased cockchafers, the poor insects used to make motions which sent me almost into a fever, — I mean their efforts to fly without being able to rise, although they spread their wings. The boys used to say, 'They are counting.' Was it sympathy for the poor insects? was it a vision of my future? Oh! to spread my wings and not have the power to fly! that is my fate ever since the failure of that fine enterprise in which others discouraged me, but which has since made the fortune of four families.

"At last, seven months ago, I resolved to make myself a name at the Paris bar, seeing how many empty places were left by the political advancement of lawyers to eminent places under government. But, recollecting the rivalries I had met with in journalism, and how difficult it is to make one's self first known in any way in Paris, that arena so filled with distinguished champions, I came to a resolution, very hard on myself but certain in its effects, and possibly more rapid in results than any other. You had often told me, in our talks together, of the social condition of Besançon, the impossibility of a stranger entering its social circles, making a sensation, marrying, or succeeding in any way whatever.

It was there that I determined to plant my flag-staff; thinking that I should find no rivals at any rate, and be all alone in seeking my return as deputy. The Besancians did not wish to know strangers, — well, then, they should never know me; society denied them admittance to its salons, — I would never seek it. I would go nowhere, not even into the streets. But there is a class which, as you know, makes the deputies to the Chamber; I mean the commercial class; I would make a special study of commercial questions (about which I knew much already); I would win cases, heal differences, and become the most powerful lawyer before the courts of commerce at Besançon. Later, I would found a Review, in which the interests of the place would be forwarded, or I would awaken a sense of them, and make them living and active questions. When I had thus won silently a sufficient number of suffrages I would give my name for election. They might disdain, even for a length of time, an unknown lawyer, but something would happen to bring me forward, some gratuitous cause, some case which none of the other lawyers cared to defend. I knew that if I once spoke I was sure of success.

"Well, my dear Léopold, I packed my library in eleven cases. I bought law-books, and I sent the whole, together with my furniture, by carrier to Besançon. I took out my diplomas, collected three thousand

francs in money, and bade you good-by. The mail-coach brought me to Besançon, where, in less than three days, I chose a small lodging which looks out on gardens. Here I have sumptuously arranged a private study, where I spend my days and nights. Here the portrait of my idol shines, — She, to whom my life is vowed; who fills it, who is the impulse of my efforts, the secret of my courage, the origin of my talents. When my furniture and books arrived I engaged an intelligent servant, and here I have lived for the last five months like a marmot in winter.

"I ought to say that my name had been duly inscribed on the register of lawyers. At last, I was one day appointed by the judge to defend a miserable prisoner at the assizes. No doubt they wanted to hear what I could do. One of the most influential men of business in Besançon happened to be on the jury, and he had, at the time, a difficult case of his own on hand. I did all that it was possible to do for my client, and met with complete success. The man was declared innocent, and I was able to bring about, most dramatically, the arrest of the real culprits, who were among the witnesses for the prosecution. The court itself shared the admiration of the public. I saved the pride of the prosecuting officer by pointing out the almost impossibility of discovering a plot so carefully laid. The result of this case was that I won the patronage of

the rich and influential merchant, and I also won his case. Soon after that the Chapter of the cathedral selected me as their lawyer in a suit against the town which had lasted four years. This I also won. So, by three suits, I became the most important lawyer in the Franche-Comté.

"But, all the same, I bury my own life in solitude, and thus I conceal my ambitions. I have contracted habits which excuse me from accepting all invitations. I can only be consulted from six to eight o'clock in the morning. I go to bed after dinner, and work during the night. The vicar-general, an able man and very influential, who was the one to entrust me with the Chapter's case (then nearly lost) naturally spoke of recompense. 'Monsieur,' I said, 'I will win your case, but I do not wish a fee — I wish something more than that' (here the abbé started). 'I must tell you that I shall lose a great deal by taking your case and by making myself the adversary of the town. I came here desiring to be made deputy; I wish to take none but commercial cases, because it is the business men who elect the deputies, and they will distrust me if I plead for *priests* — for priests you are in their eyes. If I consent to take your case it is because I was in 1828 the private secretary of' (naming the minister — much surprise on the abbé's part), 'and Master of petitions under my own name of Albert de Savarus' (still

greater surprise). 'I am faithful to the principles of Monarchy; but, inasmuch as you are not in the majority in Besançon I must obtain the votes of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the fee that I ask is the votes that you can obtain for me when the opportune moment comes. Let us keep this to ourselves, and I will defend gratis the interests of the diocese.' When he came to thank me after the cause was won he brought a bank-note of five hundred francs and whispered in my ear, 'You shall have the votes all the same.' In the five conferences that we had together I feel sure that I made myself a friend in that man.

"At the present time I am overwhelmed with business, and can take only that of the merchants; in fact, I say openly that questions of commerce are my specialty. These tactics have rallied the business men to me, and I am able to pick out the most influential among them. So everything is going well. In a few months I shall find a house in Besançon and buy it, and thus obtain a settlement for election. I count on you to lend me the money for this purchase. If I die, or fail of my purpose, there will not be serious loss. The interest on the money will be met by the rental, and I will take good care that you lose nothing on the mortgage.

"Ah! my dear Léopold, no gambler, with the last of his fortune in his pocket and staking it at the Cercle

des Étrangers on a single throw which is to make him rich or ruined, ever had such ringing in his ears, such nervous sweat on his hands, such inward tremblings of his body as I live through every day while playing this my last stake in the game of ambition. Alas! dear and only friend, the struggle has now lasted ten years. This battle with men and things, in which I have ceaselessly expended my strength and my energy, and strained my will to its utmost tension, has sapped me, so to speak, within. With every appearance of health and strength, I feel I am broken down. Every day carries away with it some shred of my inner life. At each new effort I feel that I can never make another. I have no strength left for anything but happiness, and if it does not come to lay its crown of roses on my head, the *I* that I am can exist no longer — I shall be a thing destroyed; I shall desire nothing more, I can be nothing more in this world. You know well that the power, the fame, the immense moral success I seek is but a secondary thing; for me it is only a means to bliss, the pedestal for my Idol.

"To attain my end and die, like the runners of antiquity! to see success and death together on the threshold of my door! to obtain her I love when love expires! to lose the power to enjoy when I have won the right to happiness — oh! how many men there are who meet this fate!

"Of a surety there comes a moment when Tantalus stops short, crosses his arms, and defies all hell by refusing to endure his pangs eternally. Léopold, I shall have reached that point if my hopes fail me now; if, after grovelling in the dust of this province, after prowling like a famished tiger round these merchants, these electors, to win their votes, if after giving my time, — *my time,* which I would fain have spent on the Lago Maggiore, looking at the water her eyes look at, lying beneath those eyes, hearing that voice, — I should fail to reach the Chamber and win the halo which my name must wear before she takes it.

"But more than that, Léopold; there are days when I feel an indefinable languor: a deadly disgust of all things rises in my soul, more especially if, in revery, my thoughts have dwelt in advance on the joys of happy love. Can it be that our passionate desires have but a certain amount of strength? do they perish through too great an emission of their vitality? But, after all, my life *is* beautiful, — illuminated by faith, by work, by love! Adieu, my friend; I kiss your children and beg you to recall me to the kind remembrance of your excellent wife.

"Albert."

Rosalie read this letter twice, and the general meaning of it entered her mind. She penetrated suddenly into Albert's past life; for her awakened intellect ex-

plained to her many details and made her comprehend their bearing. Connecting the confidences in this letter with the novel published in the review, she was able to understand Albert thoroughly. She magnified, not unnaturally, the proportions, actually great, of his fine soul, and the power of his firm will, and her love became thenceforth a passion, the violence of which was increased by the vigor of her youth, the dulness of her secluded life, and the inherited energy of her character. That a young girl should love is simply the effect of natural law, but when her need of affection fastens upon a remarkable man it mingles with it an enthusiasm ever ready to gush forth in all young hearts. Consequently it was not many days before Mademoiselle de Watteville's feelings reached a phase of morbid and very dangerous excitement. The baroness was at this time quite satisfied with the girl, who, under the sway of her private thoughts, no longer resisted her mother, but on the contrary, seemed absorbed in their various feminine occupations and realized the ideal of a submissive daughter.

The lawyer, meantime, had two or three cases weekly before the courts. Overwhelmed with work, he nevertheless found time to do it all and to follow up the interests of the review. He neglected no means of success; he studied the lists of the Besancian electors, and sought to discover their interests,

their characters, their various likings, their antipathies. A cardinal wishing to be elected pope never took greater trouble. But he kept himself and his life hidden, — convinced that the more secret his influence was, the more real and powerful it would become.

One evening, when Mariette came to dress Rosalie for a party, she gave her (not without groaning in spirit over such abuse of confidence) a sealed letter, the address of which made Mademoiselle de Watteville tremble and turn red and pale alternately. It read: —

To Madame la Duchesse d'Argaiolo.

(née Princesse Soderini)

à Belgirate,

Lago Maggiore. Italy.

To Rosalie's eyes those words shone with fire, as did the "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" to the eyes of Belshazzar. After hiding the letter she went downstairs to accompany her mother to Madame de Chavoncourt's, and during the whole of that interminable evening she was a prey to scruples and remorse. Already she had endured much shame for having violated her honor and read the letter from Albert to Léopold. She had several times asked herself whether, if the noble Albert knew of her crime, all the more infamous because it

could not be punished, he would respect her. Conscience answered No! vehemently. She had expiated her fault by enduring various penances: she fasted, she stayed on her knees for hours with her arms crossed on her breast, repeating prayers. She compelled Mariette to perform the same acts of repentance; the sincerest asceticism mingled with her passion and made it all the more dangerous.

"Shall I — or shall I not — read that letter?" she was saying to herself all the while that she was talking with the young de Chavoncourts. One of them was sixteen, the other seventeen and a half. Rosalie now considered her two friends as children because they did not love in secret. "If I do read it," she said to herself, after floating an hour between yes and no, "it shall certainly be the last. As I did so much to know what he said to his friend, why not do the same to know what he says to *her?* If it is a dreadful crime is it not also a proof of love? Oh! Albert, am I not in truth your wife?"

When Rosalie was in bed she opened the letter. It was dated from day to day so as to give the duchess a faithful picture of Albert's life and feelings.

"25th.

"My dear Soul, — All goes well. To the conquests I have already made, I have just added another, — a precious one. I have rendered some service to

the man in Besançon who is most influential in the matter of elections. Like those critics who make the reputation of others without ever being able to make one for themselves, he elects deputies though he has never been elected himself. The worthy man is anxious to prove his gratitude as cheaply as possible, in fact without drawing his purse-strings; and he said to me to-day, 'Should you like to enter the Chamber? I can easily have you nominated.' To this I replied, hypocritically, 'If I should resolve to enter the political arena it would be to devote myself to the interests of La Comté, which I like, and where I have been appreciated.' 'Very good,' he said, 'we will decide on you, and through you we shall get an influence in the Chamber, for you are certain to distinguish yourself.'

"And so, my dear loved angel, in spite of all you say, my persistency is about to win the crown. Before long, I shall speak from the French tribune to my country, to Europe. My name will be brought to you by the hundred voices of the French press.

"Yes, I came, as you said, old to Besançon, and Besançon has made me older still; but, like Sixtus the Fifth, I shall be young on the morrow of my election. I shall enter my real life, my sphere. Shall we not then be equals? The Comte Savaron de Savarus, ambassador to I know not where, can surely aspire to marry a Princess Soderini. Success rejuvenates men

whom successive struggles have kept alive. Oh, my dear Life! with what joy did I dart just now from my library to my study, to thy dear portrait, that I might tell it of this success before writing it to my angel. Yes, the votes I have won myself, those of the vicar-general, and those of this client make my election a certainty.

"26th.

"We are now in the twelfth year since that happy evening when, by a glance, the beautiful duchess ratified the promises of the exiled Francesca. Ah! dearest, you are now thirty-two, and I am thirty-five; the dear duke is seventy-seven, that is, ten years older than our united ages, and his health is still good. I have as much patience as I have love. In fact, I need a few more years to bring my fortunes to the level of your name. You see, dear, I am gay, I can laugh to-day; and this is the effect of hope. Sadness or gayety, all comes to me from you. The hope of success sends me back to the morrow of the day when I first saw you, when my life joined itself to yours as the earth to the sun. It is now eleven years and more since I came to that villa on the Lake of Constance! Eleven years that I cry to you, that you shine upon my life like a star too high in the heavens for man to reach.

"27th.

"No, dear, do not go to Milan; stay at Belgirate. Milan terrifies me. I cannot endure that Milanese

fashion of gossiping every evening at La Scala with a dozen persons, among whom it is impossible to believe there will not be some to say sweet things to you. To me, solitude is like amber in the bosom of which an insect lives eternally in its immutable beauty. The soul and the body of a woman thus remain in all the purity of their earliest youth. Can it be that you regret those *Tedeschi?*

"28th.

"Will they never finish your bust? I long to have you in marble, in painting, in miniature, in all ways — to cheat my impatience. I am constantly expecting that view of Belgirate to the south, and also that of the gallery. They are the only ones still wanting to my collection. I am so busy that to-day I can tell you nothing but a nothing, but that nothing is ALL. Was it not out of nothing that God made the world? My nothing is a word — the word of God: *I love thee.*

"30th.

"Ah! I have just received your journal. Thanks for your punctuality. So it did give you pleasure to read the story of our first acquaintance thus written down? Alas! much as I veiled it, I feared I should offend you. A review without a novel, you know, is like a lady without hair. Having no faculty for story-making myself, and being in despair, I took the only poetry that is in my soul, the only tale that is in my memory, and I told it in the tone in which alone it

could be told, never ceasing for one moment to think of you as I wrote the sole literary fragment which has ever come from my heart, I cannot say my pen. Did you laugh at the transformation of your surly Sormano into Gina?

"You ask about my health, — better, much, than in Paris. Though I work incessantly the quiet of everything about me has an influence on my soul. That which fatigues and ages, dear love, are the pains of mortified vanity, the perpetual irritations of Parisian life, the contests of rival ambitions. Tranquillity is a balm. If you knew what pleasure your letter gives me, that good, long letter in which you tell me all the little incidents of your life — No, you women will never know the degree of interest which a true lover takes in such daily trifles. It gives me intense pleasure to look at that specimen of your new gown; how can I help caring to know how you are dressed; whether your beautiful forehead is scratched; whether our French authors please you; whether those poems of Canalis stirred your feelings? I read all that you read. There is not a word in your letter, even to your walk by the lake, that does not touch me; it is all beautiful, sweet, and lovely as your soul. O flower divine and long adored, how could I ever have lived without these precious letters which, for eleven years, have sustained me on my struggling way, like a beacon,

like a perfume, like a measured chant, like a divine nourishment, like all that consoles and gives a charm to life. Let them never fail me. If you knew my anxiety on the days before they are due, and my sufferings if anything delays them? Is she ill? is it *he?* I live between heaven and hell; sometimes I am almost mad. *O mia cara diva*, continue to cultivate your music; exercise your voice; study. I am happy indeed in the similarity of our pursuits; even our hours are the same, so that in fact, though parted by the Alps, we live in precisely the same manner. This thought charms me and gives me courage. When I argued a case for the first time (this I have not yet told you) I fancied that you were listening, and I suddenly felt within me that influx of inspiration which puts the poet above humanity. If I go to the Chamber, oh, you will, you *must* come to Paris and be present at my first session.

"30th, at night.

"Ah! Francesca, how I love you! Alas! I have put too many things into my love, into my hopes. A single mishap would send my ship, too heavily freighted, to the bottom, engulfing my life. It is now three years since I have seen you! — the very idea of going to Belgirate makes my heart beat so violently that I must stop writing. To see you, only to hear that childlike, caressing voice! to embrace, by the eyes alone, that ivory skin, so dazzling with light,

beneath which your noble thoughts are visible! to watch those fingers as they touch the keys, to receive your soul in a look, your heart in the tones of an *Oimé!* or an *Alberto!* to walk beside you among the orange-trees in bloom, to live a few months with you in the bosom of that glorious landscape — ah, that is life! What folly to be rushing after power, name, a fortune! All is at Belgirate: there is poesy, there is fame! Why did I not stay there and be your bailiff, or, as the dear tyrant whom we cannot hate proposed to me, as your *cavaliere servente* — but *that* our ardent passion would not suffer us to accept. Adieu, dear angel; you must forgive my next sadness in remembrance of this gayety — which falls like a ray from that torch of happiness which has hitherto seemed to me too like an *ignis-fatuus.*"

"How he loves her!" cried Rosalie, letting fall the letter, which seemed to her too heavy to hold. "To write like that at the end of eleven years!"

"Mariette," said Mademoiselle de Watteville the next morning to her maid, "put that letter in the post and tell Jérôme that I know all I wish to know, and that in future he is to serve Monsieur Albert faithfully. We will confess these sins, but without saying to whom the letters belonged nor to whom they were going. I have done wrong; and I alone am to blame."

"Mademoiselle has been crying," said Mariette.

"Yes, and I don't want my mother to notice it. Give me some cold water."

In the midst of the tumults of her passion Rosalie often listened to the voice of her conscience. Touched by the wonderful fidelity of these two hearts, she had just said her prayers, admitting that she must resign herself, and respect the happiness of two beings worthy of each other, submissive to their fate and awaiting the will of God, without attempting any action or even allowing any wish that was criminal. She felt better in soul, she even obtained a certain inward satisfaction, after taking a resolution which the rectitude of youth dictated to her. Besides, she was encouraged in it by the natural thought of a young girl — was she not sacrificing herself for *him?*

"She does not know how to love," thought Rosalie. "*I* would sacrifice everything to a man who loved me like that. To be loved! — when and by whom shall I be loved? That young Monsieur de Soulas loves my money; if I were poor he would n't dream of me."

"Rosalie, my dear, what are you thinking of? you are going outside the pattern," said the baroness to her daughter, who was doing a pair of slippers in worsted-work for her father.

IV.

Rosalie spent the whole winter of 1834–1835 in secret and tumultuous agitation; but in the spring, during the month of April, when she reached her nineteenth birthday, she began to tell herself that it might be well to get the better of a Duchesse d'Argaiolo. In the silence and solitude of her life the prospect of such a struggle revived her passion and all her evil thoughts. She developed a romantic daring in making plan after plan of operations. Though such characters are exceptional, there do exist, unfortunately, too many Rosalies, and this history contains a warning by which they ought to profit.

During this winter Albert Savarus had made immense though silent progress in Besançon. Sure of success, he was now impatiently awaiting the dissolution of the Chamber. He had gained, among the men of the *juste-milieu*, one of the builders of Besançon, a rich contractor, who wielded a great influence.

The Romans, wherever they settled, took immense trouble and spent enormous sums to obtain unlimited

supplies of good water in all the towns of their empire. At Besançon they drank the water from the Arcier, a mountain at some distance from the town. Besançon stands in the middle of a horse-shoe formed by the river Doubs. Therefore, to repair the Roman aqueduct for the purpose of drinking the water the Romans drank in a town surrounded by a river is one of those apparent absurdities which could obtain acceptance only in a province where the most exemplary seriousness reigns. But if this fancy did enter the mind of the Besancians, it would need a great outlay to carry it out, and such outlay would benefit contractors. Albert Savarus had made up his mind that the water of the Doubs was only fit to run under a suspension bridge, and that no water was suitable for drinking purposes except that from the mountain. Articles on this subject appeared in the "Revue de l'Est," which were found to express the ideas of the business community of Besançon. The nobles and bourgeois, the *juste-milieu* and the legitimists, the government and the opposition were all agreed that they would drink their water through the Roman aqueduct and enjoy the benefits of a suspension bridge as well. The question of the Arcier became the leading topic of the day. At Besançon, as in all other places, there were secret interests which sprang into a vigorous vitality at the prospect. Cautious persons who opposed these schemes

(there were but few of them, it is true) were regarded as blockheads. The whole town busied itself with the two projects of Albert Savarus.

After eighteen months of subterraneous work, that ambitious man had actually succeeded, in the most stagnant town in France and the most refractory under foreign influence, in stirring public opinion deeply, and in pulling, as the saying is, the wires of a positive influence without once leaving his own home. He had solved the singular problem of becoming powerful without the slightest popularity.

During this winter he won seven cases for the clergy of Besançon, and at times he drew long breaths of relief at the thought of his assured triumph. The immense desire which led him to draw so many interests into his field of action, and to invent so many resources, absorbed all the powers of his soul, already strained too heavily. People praised his disinterested conduct; he accepted without remark the fees that his clients offered him. But such disinterestedness was really a form of moral usury; he expected a payment greater in his eyes than all the gold in the kingdom. He had bought, in October, 1834, the house of a merchant whose affairs were involved, and he had paid for it with money advanced by Léopold Hannequin. The ownership of this property made him eligible for election.

"You are certainly a very remarkable man," the

Abbé de Grancey said to him, having closely observed and fathomed much of his character. The vicar-general had brought with him an ecclesiastic who wanted legal advice. "You are a priest who has missed his vocation."

The remark struck Savarus forcibly.

By this time Rosalie had decided, with the strong will of a fragile young girl, to bring Monsieur Savarus into her mother's salon and present him to the society of the hôtel de Rupt. Her desires were limited, so far, to the pleasure of seeing Albert and listening to him. She had compromised with her conscience, so to speak, and such compromises are usually mere truces.

Les Rouxey, the patrimonial estate of the Watteville, produced the sum of ten thousand francs a year, net; but in other hands it would have brought in more. The careless indifference of the baron, whose wife had an income of forty thousand, left Les Rouxey to the management of a sort of Maître Jacques, an old family servant named Modinier. Still, whenever the baron and baroness wished to stay in the country they usually went to Les Rouxey, which is very picturesquely situated. The house, the park, in fact the whole place was created by the famous Watteville, who, in his active old age, was passionately fond of this beautiful spot.

Between two little alps, and two peaks, the summits of which are bare and are called, respectively, the Great and the Little Rouxey, and across the gorge where the water of these mountains and that of the Dent de Vilard flow to meet the delightful sources of the Doubs, the great Watteville took it into his head to build an enormous dam, leaving two outlets to take the overflow. He thus obtained a charming lake, and, at the outlets, two cascades, which, uniting at some little distance below their fall, formed a stream that watered the dry and uncultivated valley, which had hitherto been only devastated by the rushing torrents from the hills. He enclosed this lake, valley, and the two hills, and built a small country-house or hermitage near the dam, bringing to the spot all the soil which it was necessary to remove to make the bed of the river below the falls, and also that of the various streamlets for irrigation.

When the Baron de Watteville made this lake he owned the two Rouxey mountains, but not the upper valley which he thus flooded, and through which the country people had always had a right of way to the Dent de Vilard, which closes this horseshoe valley at its upper end. But the savage old man inspired such terror that during his lifetime no remonstrance was made by the inhabitants of Riceys, a little village lying on the slopes of the Dent de Vilard. Before

the baron died he had built a wall from one Rouxey mountain to the other, at the foot of the Dent de Vilard, so as not to inundate the two valleys which open into the Rouxey gorge on either side of the Vilard peak. He and his heirs thus became the protectors of the village of Riceys, and so maintained their usurpation. This old murderer, renegade, and former Abbé de Watteville ended his career by planting trees and constructing a fine road on the flank of one of the Rouxeys, which led into the great mail highway. Belonging to the park and the château were large ill-cultivated domains, chalets on the slopes of the two mountains, and woods as yet unexplored. All was wild and solitary, guarded by Nature only, and left to the tangle of vegetation, but full of sublime nooks and aspects.

It is unnecessary to burden this history with a detailed account of the efforts and schemes, bearing the imprint of genius, by which Rosalie contrived, without exciting any suspicion, to attain her end. It is enough to say that she apparently obeyed her mother when she left Besançon in May, 1835, in an old travelling-carriage drawn by two good hired horses, and accompanied her father for a little visit to Les Rouxey.

Love explains all to young girls. When she rose on the morning after her arrival, and saw from her

bedroom window the beautiful sheet of water, above which the mists were rising like smoke and floating upward among the pines and larches which clothed the slopes of the mountain until they reached the summit, Mademoiselle de Watteville gave a cry of admiration.

"*They* loved each other beside a lake! *She* is by a lake! Yes, a lake is full of love."

A lake fed by snows has the colors of an opal and the transparency of a diamond; and if shut in, like that of Rouxey, between two granite ledges clothed with black firs, where silence reigns, the silence of the steppes or the prairies, it inspires every one with the admiration which forced a cry from Rosalie.

"We owe that to the famous Watteville," said her father.

"He wanted to win pardon for his crimes," said the girl. "Let us get into that boat and go to the farther end of the lake; it will give us an appetite for breakfast."

The baron sent for two young gardeners who knew how to row, and took his prime minister, Modinier, with him. They were soon at the upper end of the lake, which is bounded by the Dent de Vilard, the Jungfrau of this lesser Switzerland.

"Here we are, Monsieur le baron," said Modinier,

making a sign to the two rowers to fasten the boat. "Will you come and look at it?"

"Look at what?" asked Rosalie.

"Oh, nothing," said the baron. "However, you are such a discreet girl, and we have had so many secrets together, that I can safely tell you what is troubling me. Since 1830, difficulties have sprung up between me and the township of Riceys about the Dent de Vilard; and I want to settle them without your mother finding it out; for she is so obstinate she is capable of setting everything on fire and flames; especially if she discovers that the mayor of Riceys, a republican, has invented this claim merely to ingratiate himself with his people."

Rosalie had the coolness to conceal her joy so as to act with greater force upon her father.

"What claim?" she asked.

"Mademoiselle," said Modinier, "the people of Riceys have long had the right of pasture and of cutting wood on their side of the Dent de Vilard. Now Monsieur Chantonnit, their mayor since 1830, insists that the mountain belongs wholly to his township, and that over a hundred years ago the villagers had a right of way through our land. You see, we should have no privacy at all in that case. Besides, this brute would soon say — what the old men of Riceys say now — that the whole ground the lake covers was

unlawfully taken by the Abbé de Watteville, — and that, of course, would be the ruin of Les Rouxey."

"Unfortunately, my dear, between ourselves, that's all true," said the baron, candidly; "the land is a usurpation, legalized by the lapse of time. So, to prevent future trouble, I want to have my boundaries amicably settled; and when that is done I shall build a wall to mark them."

"If you yield to the democracy," said Rosalie, "it will eat you up. You ought to have threatened the Riceys people."

"That is just what I was saying to Monsieur last night," remarked Modinier. "And to strengthen it, I want him to find out if there are not, on this side of the Dent or on the other, somewhere, the signs of a boundary."

"My dear father," said Rosalie, returning to the boat, "I agree with Modinier. If you want to maintain your rights on the Dent de Vilard, you should act promptly, and obtain a legal decision which will secure you against the attempts of this Chantonnit. What are you afraid of? Employ that famous Monsieur Savarus; secure him at once, for fear Chantonnit should engage him for the township. The man who won the suit of the Chapter against the town will certainly be able to win that of the Wattevilles against Riceys. Besides," she added, "Les Rouxey will one day be

mine (not for a long while yet, I hope); well, then, don't leave me at the mercy of a lawsuit. I like this place; I shall often live here; I shall improve it as much as I am able. On those slopes," she said, pointing to the sides of the hills, "I should thin out the trees and make delightful English gardens. Let us go back to Besançon now, and return with the Abbé de Grancey, Monsieur Savarus, and my mother, if she chooses to come. Then you can make up your mind; but, if I were you, I should decide now. You are named Watteville, and yet you are afraid of a fight! If you do lose your suit — come, I'll promise never to blame you."

"Oh, if you look at it that way," said the baron, "I am willing. I will go and see that lawyer."

"After all, a lawsuit is very amusing. It will give some interest to life; there will be coming and going, and a thousand things to do before the case is tried. We did not see the Abbé de Grancey for three weeks when the Chapter's suit was going on, he was so busy."

"But that concerned the very existence of the Chapter," said Monsieur de Watteville. "Besides, the self-respect, the conscience of the archbishop, all that the priesthood depend on was at stake. That Savarus has no idea what he did for the Chapter; he saved it."

"Listen to me," she whispered in his ear; "if you

get Monsieur Savarus on your side you will be sure to win, won't you? Well, then, let me give you a bit of advice. You cannot get Monsieur Savarus to take the case unless through Monsieur de Grancey. Let us both speak, you and I, to the dear abbé without mamma being present; for I know a way to make him urge Monsieur Savarus to defend us."

"It will be very difficult to keep from telling your mother."

"The Abbé de Grancey will tell her later; but if you'll make up your mind to promise to vote for Monsieur Savarus at the next elections, you will get what you want."

"Go to the polls! Take the oath! I?" cried Monsieur de Watteville.

"Pooh!" she said.

"And what will your mother say?"

"Perhaps she would tell you to go," replied Rosalie, who knew from Albert's letter to Léopold of the abbé's promises.

Four days later the Abbé de Grancey paid a very early visit to Albert Savarus, having notified him the night before that he was coming. The purpose of the old priest was to retain the great lawyer for the Watteville interests, — a step which reveals the tact and cleverness which Rosalie had subterraneously employed.

"What can I do for you, Monsieur l'Abbé?" asked Savarus.

The abbé divulged his purpose with much friendliness, but was coldly listened to by Albert.

"Monsieur l'abbé," said the latter, "it is impossible for me to take the case of the Wattevilles, and I will show you why. My rôle here consists in keeping to the strictest neutrality. I do not wish to be of any color or party at all. I desire to remain an enigma until the day of my election. To take the Watteville case would involve nothing at all in Paris; but here, where everything is talked about and commented on, I should be called a man of your faubourg Saint-Germain."

"Now, do you suppose," said the abbé, "that you can keep yourself unknown on the day of the election, when all the candidates attack one another. Everyone will know then that your name is Savaron de Savarus; that you were once Master of petitions, and a man of the Restoration."

"On the election day," said Savarus, "I shall be all that I ought to be. I intend to speak at the preparatory meetings."

"If Monsieur de Watteville and his party support you, you will have a hundred solid votes, surer than those you are counting on; for dissensions can always be sown among self-interests, but you can't separate those who are held together by convictions."

"The devil!" cried Savarus. "I love you, and I would like to do all I can for you, Father. Is there any way of compromising with the devil? I might, perhaps, by employing Girardet, and guiding him secretly, make Monsieur de Watteville's case drag on till after the elections. But I certainly will not take part in it myself till then."

"Well, do one thing," said the abbé; "come to hôtel de Rupt; there you'll find a little girl of nineteen, who will some day have a hundred thousand francs a year in her own right; you can pretend to be paying her attentions."

"Ah! that young girl I see sometimes in the kiosk?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle Rosalie," continued the abbé. "You are ambitious; if you please her, you might become all that an ambitious man can make himself, — who knows? minister perhaps. A man can always be a minister when he has a hundred thousand francs a year joined to your astounding capacities."

"Monsieur l'abbé," said Albert, quickly; "Mademoiselle de Watteville might have three times that fortune, and even adore me, and it would still be impossible for me to marry her."

"Are you married?" exclaimed the abbé.

"No, not in church, not before a mayor," said Savarus, "but morally."

"That is all the stronger when a man cares for it as much as I see you do," replied the abbé. "However, all which is not done need not be done. Don't rest everything, plans and fortune too, on the will of a woman ; a wise man does not wait for the shoes of a dead one to set foot on his way."

"Let us say no more about Mademoiselle de Watteville," said Albert, gravely, "but settle what we were speaking of. For your sake, and because I love and respect you, I will take Monsieur de Watteville's case, but not appear in it till after the elections. Until then Girardet must conduct it according to my advice. That is all I can agree to do."

"But there are points which cannot be decided on without an inspection of the locality," said the vicar-general.

"Girardet can go," said Savarus. "I cannot allow myself to take, under the eyes of this town which I know very well, a step which would compromise the immense stake I have in my election."

The Abbé de Grancey parted from Savarus with a shrewd look, by which he seemed to laugh at the invulnerable resolution of the young athlete, all the while admiring his firmness.

"Ah!" cried Rosalie, the next day as she stood in the kiosk, and watched Albert in his study, having

heard of the result of the abbé's mission from Monsieur de Watteville, "I have driven my father into a lawsuit, I have moved heaven and earth to bring you here, — yes! I have committed a mortal sin for you, and you will not come to us, and I shall never hear that noble voice. You make conditions, do you, when the Wattevilles and the Rupts make advances? Well, then, God knows I meant to be contented with those little pleasures, — seeing you, listening to you, going to Rouxey with you to feel it blessed by your presence; I did not even wish for more — but now, now I will be your wife! Yes, gaze at *her* portrait, examine those drawings of *her* house, *her* room, the views of *her* villa and *her* gardens. You want her statue! I'll make that woman marble to you! She cannot love. Arts, science, books, music, — they have taken half her mind and half her senses. Besides, she is old, she is over thirty, and my Albert would be wretched with her."

"What are you doing here, Rosalie?" said her mother, coming into the kiosk, and scattering her reflections. "Monsieur de Soulas is in the salon; he took notice of your behavior, which certainly betrays more thought than you ought to have at your age."

"Is Monsieur de Soulas opposed to thinking?" asked Rosalie.

"Then you were thinking?" said Madame de Watteville.

"Yes, mamma."

"No, you were not. You were gazing at the windows of that lawyer, with an interest that is neither proper nor decent, and which Monsieur de Soulas should be the last to remark."

"Why?" asked Rosalie.

"Rosalie," said the baroness, "it is high time you should know our intentions. Amédée likes you, and you will not be badly off as the Comtesse de Soulas."

Pale as a lily Rosalie made no answer to her mother; the violence of her thwarted feelings made her stupid. But when she came into the presence of the man whom for the last few moments she had begun to hate, her lips took on a smile such as we see on those of opera dancers in a ballet. She was even able to laugh, and had the strength to hide her fury, which subsided as she suddenly resolved to employ that heavy, dull young man to carry out her schemes.

"Monsieur Amédée," she said, when the baroness walked before them in the garden, affecting to leave the young people to themselves, "did you know that Monsieur Albert Savaron de Savarus is a legitimist?"

"Legitimist?"

"Yes; before 1830 he was Master of petitions to the Council of State, and secretary to the Council of ministers, and was much thought of by the Dauphin and Dauphiness. It would have been better if you had

never said a word against him, and now it will be better still if you will assist in electing him to the Chamber this year, and so prevent that poor Monsieur de Chavoncourt from representing the town of Besançon."

"What a sudden interest you seem to take in that lawyer."

"Monsieur Albert de Savarus, natural son of the Comte de Savarus (oh! pray don't say I told you all this), is to be our lawyer in the affair of Les Rouxey, provided he is elected. My father tells me that Les Rouxey is to be my property, and I mean to live there; it is enchanting. I should be in despair if that magnificent creation of the great Watteville were cut up."

"The deuce!" thought Amédée, as he left the hôtel de Rupt; "the heiress is not such a fool as her mother thinks she is."

Monsieur de Chavoncourt was a royalist who belonged to the famous 221. Accordingly, the day after the revolution of July, 1830, he began to preach the salutary doctrine of taking the oath and making a constitutional opposition to the existing order of things, like the Tories against the Whigs in England. This doctrine was not acceptable to the legitimists, who kept aloof under defeat, trusting to the force of inactivity and the help of Providence. Distrusted politically by his own social class, Monsieur de Chavoncourt seemed to the party of the *juste-milieu* the best choice they

could make; they preferred the acceptance of his moderate opinions to the triumph of a republican by the votes of enthusiasts and "patriots." Monsieur de Chavoncourt as a man was greatly respected in Besançon; he came of an old parliamentary family; his fortune, about fifteen thousand francs a year, excited little envy from the fact that he had a son and three daughters. Fifteen thousand francs a year is a mere nothing with such expenses. When, therefore, the father of a family in such circumstances is known to be incorruptible, how can his fellow-citizens avoid respecting him? Voters are often enthusiastic over an ideal of parliamentary virtue, just as the gallery applauds an exhibition of generous sentiments which it does not practise.

Madame de Chavoncourt, then about forty years of age, was one of the handsomest women in Besançon. During the sessions of the Chamber she lived in a cheap way on one of their farms in the neighborhood, in order to economize the cost of Monsieur de Chavoncourt's stay in Paris. During the winters she received her friends in a suitable manner once a week on Tuesdays, and she thoroughly understood her vocation as hostess. Young de Chavoncourt, her son, then about twenty-two years old, was extremely intimate with another young man, Monsieur de Vauchelles, who was also a college friend of Amédée de Soulas. They

walked together, hunted together, and were known to be so inseparable that they were usually invited together. Rosalie, who was equally intimate with the Chavoncourt sisters, knew very well that the three young men had no secrets from each other. She reflected that if Monsieur de Soulas betrayed her confidence it would be to these intimate friends. Now, Monsieur de Vauchelles had his own marriage scheme, as Amédée had his; he wanted to marry Victoire, the eldest Chavoncourt sister, on whom an old aunt had settled a domain worth seven thousand francs a year, and a dowry of a hundred thousand francs in money. Victoire was her goddaughter and her favorite niece. It was certain therefore that young de Vauchelles and de Chavoncourt would inform Monsieur de Chavoncourt of the opposition which Albert was about to make to his election.

But this was not enough for Rosalie. She wrote an anonymous letter with her left hand to the Prefect of the department, signing it "A friend to Louis-Philippe," in which she informed him of the secret intentions of Monsieur Albert de Savarus, pointing out to him the dangerous help a royalist orator would give to Berryer, and betraying Albert's whole scheme and conduct in coming to Besançon, as she had read it in his letters. The Prefect, an able man, was personally inimical to the royalist party, and devoted, from con-

viction, to the government of July, — one of those men, in short, who made the minister of the Interior declare, "We have a *good* prefect at Besançon." The Prefect read the letter, and obeyed the injunction it contained to burn it.

Rosalie's object was to make Albert lose his election, and keep him five years longer in Besançon.

In those days the elections were a struggle between parties, and in order to gain an advantage the ministry selected both the time and place for the contest. The election was now appointed to take place at the end of three months. When a man has staked his whole life upon the turn of an election, the time which elapses between the ordinance issued and the day fixed is a period during which his ordinary life is at a standstill. Rosalie fully understood the chances that this gave her. She compelled Mariette (whom, as she afterwards admitted, she promised to take into her service with Jérôme) to bring to her all the letters which Albert received, and all those which he sent to Italy. While thus employed in manœuvring these plans this astounding young girl was working at her father's slippers with an ingenuous air; in fact, she increased the candor and innocence of her manner, being well aware that they served her purpose.

"My daughter is growing really charming," said Madame de Watteville.

Two months before the elections a meeting took place at the house of Monsieur Boucher, the head of the company of the "Revue de l'Est," at which were present the contractor who hoped for the building of the bridge and the waterworks at Arcier, the father-in-law of Monsieur Boucher, Monsieur Granet, the influential man already mentioned to whom Albert had done a service, and who intended to propose him as a candidate, the lawyer Girardet, the printer of the "Revue," and the president of the Court of commerce. There were present about twenty-seven persons, all, in provincial language, "big-wigs." Each of them represented at least six votes; at first the number was estimated at ten, for persons always begin by exaggerating their own influence. Among these twenty-seven persons was a friend of the Prefect, a man with a secret hope of obtaining something for himself and his family from the administration. At this first meeting it was agreed, with an enthusiasm little to be expected in Besançon, to present the lawyer Savaron as candidate for election.

While waiting in his study until Alfred Boucher should summon him to the meeting Albert received a visit from the Abbé de Grancey, who was deeply interested in his vast ambition. Albert recognized the great political capacity of the priest, and the priest, touched by the young man's entreaty, had served him as guide

and counsellor in the present struggle. The Chapter did not like Monsieur de Chavoncourt, partly for his opinions, and partly because the brother-in-law of his wife was president of the court in which they were defeated in the first trial of their famous case.

"My dear son," began the shrewd and worthy abbé, in the calm and gentle voice that characterizes an old priest, "you are betrayed."

"Betrayed!" cried the lover, struck to the heart.

"By whom I do not yet know," continued the priest, "but the Prefect knows all your plans and sees your game. I can't give you any advice at this moment. Such matters have to be studied. As to the meeting of this evening, you had better take the bull by the horns and meet the attack which will be made against you shortly. Relate your past life and tell your purpose; in this way you will lessen the effect the discovery will produce in Besançon."

"Oh, I expected this!" said Savarus, in a changed voice.

"You would not take my advice when I gave you the opportunity to go to the hôtel de Rupt. You don't know what you might have gained by going there."

"What should I have gained?"

"The unanimous support of the royalists, — a momentary agreement which would have brought to your election at least a hundred votes. By adding those to

what we call among ourselves the "ecclesiastical vote," though you might not have been nominated, you were certain of election by the ballot."

When Alfred Boucher came in, full of enthusiasm, to announce the decision of the informal meeting, he found the lawyer and the vicar-general cool, calm, and exceedingly grave.

"Adieu, Monsieur l'abbé," said Savarus, "we will talk of your affair as soon as the election is over."

Then he took Boucher's arm, after pressing the abbé's hand significantly. The priest turned and gazed at the ambitious man, whose face at that moment wore the look that a general's must wear when he hears the first cannon of the coming battle. The abbé raised his eyes to heaven as he left the room, saying to himself, "Oh, what a priest he would have made!"

Eloquence does not really belong to the bar. It is seldom that a lawyer displays the true powers of his soul; if he did, he would die of it in a few years. Neither is eloquence found in the pulpit of to-day. There are moments in the Chamber of Deputies when some ambitious man, staking all to win all, and pricked by a thousand arrows, bursts forth eloquently at a given moment. But this is more likely to happen with certain rare souls during the fateful quarter of an hour when success hangs in the balance,

and they are called upon to speak. At this meeting Albert Savarus, feeling the necessity of obtaining adherents, brought every faculty of his soul and all the resources of his mind to bear upon his object.

He entered the room where the meeting was in progress admirably, without either awkwardness or assumption, without timidity or weakness, but with gravity, and found himself in the midst of some thirty or more persons — for a rumor of the meeting and its decision had brought in a few more sheep, docile to their bell-wether. Before listening to Monsieur Boucher, who was about to make him a speech on the resolution of the committee, Albert requested silence by a gesture, at the same time pressing Monsieur Boucher's hand to warn him of some sudden danger.

"My young friend, Alfred Boucher, has just brought me word of the honor which has been done to me. But before this decision becomes definitive," said Savarus, "I think it my duty to explain to you fully who your candidate is, so as to leave you free to withdraw your promises if my declarations should trouble your consciences."

This exordium produced an instantaneous silence. Some present thought the action a very noble one.

Albert explained his past life; gave his full name; stated his position under the Restoration, and asserted that he was making himself a new career since

his arrival in Besançon, giving at the same time pledges for the future. His audience hung breathless on his words. These men, actuated by so many diverse interests, were subjugated by the eloquence which came rushing from the heart and soul of the ambitious man. Admiration hindered all reflection. Those present saw but one thing, — the thing that Albert wished them to see.

Was it not better, they said to themselves, that the town should be represented by a man evidently destined to govern, rather than by a mere voting mechanism? A statesman was an actual power; a commonplace deputy, however incorruptible, was only a conscience. What glory Provence had acquired by comprehending the genius of Mirabeau, and by sending to the Chamber since 1830 the only statesman produced by the revolution of July.

Under pressure of Albert's eloquence, all present believed him fitted to become, as their representative, a magnificent political instrument. They saw a future minister in the man. His profession of faith, his avowal of ambition, and the recital of his career were, in the words of one present who afterwards became one of the ablest men in Besançon, "a masterpiece of skill, sentiment, fervor, shrewdness, and seduction." The whirlwind of his eloquence caught up the electors. No man had ever a greater triumph.

But, unfortunately, spoken words, weapons for close range, have only an immediate effect. If a vote could have been taken then, most assuredly Albert's name would have issued from the urn. For the time being he was conqueror. But to succeed he would have to conquer daily for two months. He left the meeting throbbing with hope. Applauded to the echo, he knew he had won the great result of forestalling and killing the gossip to which the rumor of his antecedents would otherwise give rise. The commercial class in Besançon accepted Monsieur Savaron de Savarus as its candidate.

The Prefect, alarmed at this success, began to count up and marshal the ministerial votes. He sought and obtained a secret interview with Monsieur de Chavoncourt, with the object of a coalition for their mutual interests. Every day (though Albert was unable to discover how and why it was) the support of the Boucher committee dwindled. One month before the elections he found he could hardly count on sixty votes. The quiet underhand work of the Prefecture was irresistible. Three or four clever men suggested to clients who had employed Savarus, "If he is made deputy he cannot attend to your affairs. How can he give you advice, or draw your deeds and your conveyances? You could have his services five years more if, instead of sending him to the Chamber now,

you held out hopes of it at the following elections.'" This argument was all the more injurious to Savarus because the wives of several of his clients took it up. The contractor and others interested in the bridges and waterworks at Arcier were made to see, in a conference with a clever emissary, that the promotion of their interests really lay with the Prefecture, and not with an ambitious deputy.

Every day brought some new defeat; though every day he waged his battle, — a battle directed by himself but fought by his lieutenants; a battle of words, speeches, measures. He dared not go to the vicar-general, and the vicar-general no longer came to him. Albert rose in the mornings and went to bed at night with fever in his pulses and his brain on fire.

At last the day came for the first struggle, — that of the preparatory meeting, as it is called, where preliminary votes are given, where the candidates can judge of their chances, and wise heads foresee either failure or success. It is a scene like the English "hustings," and, except that it is decent and without the mob, as terrible. The emotions felt have no physical expression, as in England, but they are none the less intense. The English manage the matter with fists, the French with phrases. Our neighbors fight a battle; we play our game with cool manœuvres calmly elaborated. This political act is performed by each of the two nations in a manner the exact reverse of their two natures.

The radical candidate appeared; Monsieur de Chavoncourt presented himself; then Albert, who was at once accused by the radicals and the Chavoncourt committee of being a legitimist unreconciled, — another Berryer. The administration also had its candidate. Thus divided, the votes of course gave no result. The republican candidate had twenty, the ministry fifty, Albert seventy, and Monsieur de Chavoncourt sixty-eight. But for this preliminary count the treacherous Prefecture had thrown some thirty of its votes for Albert for the purpose of misleading its adversaries; its real force was over eighty votes, and if those cast for Monsieur de Chavoncourt, together with those of a few radicals, could be diverted it was master of the situation. One hundred and forty votes were still to be heard from, — those of Monsieur de Grancey and the legitimists. A preparatory meeting is to the real election what a rehearsal is to a play, — the most misleading thing in the world.

Albert Savarus returned home, holding his head high, but dying at heart. Two men who were devoted to him but who were voting in the enemies' camp had contrived to let him know towards the end of the meeting that thirty of the votes deposited for him were a blind. A criminal marching to execution never suffered more than Albert as he walked home that night from the house where his fate was staked. The

unhappy man would let no one accompany him. He walked alone through the streets between eleven o'clock and midnight.

At one in the morning Savarus, who had not slept for three nights, was still sitting in his library, pale as death, his hands and arms pendent, in an attitude of utter abandonment that might have served for the Magdalen. Tears were beneath his long eyelashes, — those tears that wet the eyes but do not fall, for thought drinks them, the fire of the soul dries their moisture. In solitude he could weep. He saw through the window a white form hovering in the kiosk which recalled to him Francesca.

"It is now three months since She has written to me! What has become of her? Is she ill? Oh, my love, my life! will you ever know all that I have suffered? What a fatal organization is mine! Have I an aneurism?" he asked, feeling his heart beat so violently that its pulsations echoed in the utter silence like atoms of sand falling upon iron.

At that instant three distinct raps were given upon Albert's door. He opened it instantly, and came near fainting when he saw the face of the vicar-general, beaming with joy and an air of triumph. He caught the abbé in his arms without a word, pressed him tightly, and let his head fall on the shoulder of the old man, weeping as he had wept on the night he first

knew that Francesca was married. To the priest alone could he show his weakness.

"Forgive me, dear abbé," he said, "but you have come at one of those supreme moments in life when our manhood vanishes, — for you must not think me a man of mere vulgar ambitions."

"I know, I know!" said the abbé. "You wrote that story of 'Ambition through Love'! Ah, my son, despair in love made me a priest in 1786, when I was twenty-two years old. In 1788 I was a curate. I know life. I have refused three bishoprics; I wish to die in Besançon."

"Come and see Her," cried Savarus, taking a candle and leading the abbé into his study, where was the portrait of the Duchesse d'Argaiolo, which he lighted up.

"She is one of the women who are made to reign," said the vicar, comprehending the true affection which Albert proved to him by this mute confidence. "But there is pride on that brow, implacable pride; she would never forgive an injury. It is the archangel Michael, the avenging angel, the inflexible angel. All or nothing! that is the motto of those angelic characters. There is something, I know not what, divinely untamable in that head."

"Ah, you have divined her!" cried Savarus. "For twelve years, dear abbé, she has ruled my life and I have never had one thought unfaithful to her — "

"Would that you had done as much for God!" exclaimed the abbé, naïvely. "But now let us talk of your affairs. For the last ten days I have been working for you. If you are a true politician you will take my advice this time. You would not be where you are now if you had gone to the hôtel de Rupt as I told you to do. But you must go there to-morrow evening; I will present you. The estate of Rouxey is in danger, and you must argue the case within the next two days, and the election does not take place till the third day. Care will be taken, however, not to come to any result on that day. There will be several ballots, and you will get your election through balloting."

"But how?"

"If you win the Rouxey suit you are sure of eighty legitimist votes; add those to the thirty I hold, that makes a hundred and ten; with twenty the Boucher committee still have, you can count on one hundred and thirty votes."

"Yes," said Albert; "but I need sixty-five more."

"I know that; and all the rest belong at present to the administration. But you can really have two hundred votes if you choose, while the prefecture will have only one hundred and eighty."

"How can I have two hundred votes?" said Albert, who had sprung to his feet as if moved by springs, and now stood rigid with astonishment.

"You will have the votes of Monsieur de Chavoncourt," replied the abbé.

"How?"

"You will marry Mademoiselle Sidonie de Chavoncourt."

"Never."

"You will marry Mademoiselle Sidonie de Chavoncourt," repeated the abbé, coldly.

"Look! you said yourself she was implacable," said Albert, pointing to the portrait of Francesca.

"You will marry Mademoiselle Sidonie de Chavoncourt," said the priest, coldly, for the third time.

This time Albert understood him. He saw that the vicar-general would not personally meddle in a matter which would lift him out of his despair. A word more would have compromised his dignity as a priest.

"To-morrow evening you will meet Madame de Chavoncourt at the hôtel de Rupt, and you will thank her for all she proposes to do for you. You can tell her your gratitude is boundless, and that you belong body and soul to her and to her family. You will have a passage at arms with Madame de Chavoncourt, who will want to obtain some promise from you. Your future lies in to-morrow evening, my son. But remember, I have had nothing to do with all this. I am responsible only for the legitimist votes; I have won Madame de Watteville for you, and with her all the aristocracy

of Besançon. Amédée de Soulas and de Vauchellès, who will vote for you, lead the young men, and Madame de Watteville the old ones. As to the votes I control they are infallible."

"Who has influenced Madame de Chavoncourt?" said Savarus.

"Ask no questions," replied the abbé. "Monsieur de Chavoncourt, who has three daughters to marry, cannot increase his fortune. If Vauchelles marries the eldest without dowry from him (her aunt having provided for her), what is he to do with the other two? Some one has suggested to Madame de Chavoncourt that she had better marry one of them, rather than let her husband go to Paris and spend money. Some one leads Madame de Chavoncourt, and Madame de Chavoncourt leads her husband."

"That's enough, my dear abbé; I understand. If I am made a deputy, I must make somebody's fortune, and that will release me of all obligation. In me you will have a son, — a man who will owe his happiness to you. Good heavens! what have I done to deserve such kindness?"

"You saved the Chapter," said the abbé, smiling. "Keep all this as secret as the grave. We priests have nothing to do with it. If it were known that we meddled in the elections, those puritans of the Left would eat us alive, and we should be blamed by those

of our own party who want the management in their own hands. Madame de Chavoncourt knows nothing of my part in all this. I have trusted no one but Madame de Watteville, who can be counted on like one of ourselves."

"I shall bring the duchess here that you may bless our union," cried Savarus.

After showing the abbé to the door Albert went to bed and to sleep, wrapped in dreams of power.

V.

At nine o'clock the next evening the salons of Madame la Baronne de Watteville were, as may readily be imagined, full to overflowing with the Besancian aristocracy, specially invited for the occasion. Every one was discussing the *exception* they proposed to make in taking part in the election. It was known that a former Master of petitions, the late secretary of one of the most faithful ministers of the Eldest Branch, was to be introduced. Madame de Chavoncourt was there, with her second daughter, Sidonie, charmingly dressed, while the eldest, sure of her marriage, had recourse to no special toilet artifices. Such little matters are noticed in the provinces. The Abbé de Grancey, with his fine, shrewd head, moved about from group to group, listening to all but mingling with none, and saying every now and then those incisive words which sum up questions or suggest them.

"If the Eldest Branch were to return," he remarked to a septuagenarian politician, "what sort of statesmanship would it find now? Berryer, alone upon his bench, can do nothing; but give him sixty votes, and

he could trip up the government on many occasions, and overthrow their administrations."

"The Duc de Fitz-james is to be elected at Toulouse —"

"If you vote for Monsieur de Savarus, the republicans will join you rather than vote with the *juste-milieu*," etc.

At nine o'clock Albert had not arrived. Madame de Watteville was inclined to regard the delay as an impertinence on his part.

"Oh, no, madame," said Madame de Chavoncourt; "we must not allow such really serious matters to be affected by a trifle, — a varnished boot not quite dry, a legal consultation at the last moment, may detain him."

Rosalie looked askance at Madame de Chavoncourt.

"She is very considerate of Monsieur de Savarus," she whispered to her mother.

"Oh," replied Madame de Watteville, smiling, "there is some talk of a marriage between Sidonie and Monsieur de Savarus."

Mademoiselle de Watteville turned and went hastily to a window overlooking the garden.

At ten o'clock Albert de Savarus had not appeared. The muttering storm now burst. Some of the guests went to the card-tables, finding the delay intolerable. The Abbé de Grancey, who knew not what to think,

walked to the window where Rosalie was hidden, and said aloud, so bewildered was he, "He must be dead." Then he opened the window and stepped into the garden, followed by Monsieur de Watteville and his daughter. All three went to the kiosk. Albert's rooms were closed and no lights visible.

"Jérôme!" cried Rosalie, seeing the servant in the courtyard. The abbé looked at her with amazement. "Where is your master?" she asked when Jérôme came to the foot of the wall.

"Gone — in a post-chaise, mademoiselle."

"Lost!" exclaimed the abbé de Grancey, — "or happy!"

The light of triumph on Rosalie's face was not so quickly hidden but that the vicar-general saw it, though he feigned to see nothing.

"What has that young girl had to do with all this?" thought the priest.

All three returned to the salon, where Monsieur de Watteville announced the strange and startling news of the departure of Monsieur de Savarus in a post-chaise, apparently without giving any reasons for his disappearance. By half-past eleven only a dozen persons were left in the salon, among them Madame de Chavoncourt and her two daughters, Monsieur de Vauchelles, the Abbé de Grancey and the Abbé de Godenars, another vicar-general, who was seeking to be a

bishop, and Amédée de Soulas. The Abbé de Grancey placed himself by Madame de Watteville in a position which enabled him to keep his eye on Rosalie, whose face, usually so pale, was now flushed with fever.

"What can have happened to Monsieur de Savarus?" Madame de Chavoncourt was saying.

Just then a servant in livery handed a note on a silver tray to the Abbé de Grancey.

"Read your letter," said the baroness.

The vicar-general read it, noticing that Rosalie turned as white as her handkerchief.

"She knows the writing," thought the abbé after glancing at the girl above his spectacles. He folded the letter and put it quietly into his pocket without a word. In three minutes he received three looks from Rosalie which enabled him to guess all.

"She loves Albert Savarus!" thought he.

The abbé rose, took leave, and went towards the door. In the second salon Rosalie joined him.

"It was from *Albert*," she said.

"How do you know his writing well enough to distinguish it at that distance?"

The young girl, thus caught in the meshes of her own impatient anger, said a thing which the abbé thought sublime.

"Because I love him! — What has happened?" she added after a pause.

"He renounces his election," replied the abbé.

Rosalie laid a finger on her lips.

"I ask you to grant me the secrecy of the confessional on all this," she said before she left him to return to the salon. "If there is no election there 'll be no marriage with Sidonie," she thought, as she walked back.

The next morning on her way to mass Mademoiselle de Watteville heard from Mariette some of the circumstances which led to Albert's departure at the most critical moment of his life.

"Mademoiselle," said Mariette, "an old gentleman arrived from Paris yesterday at the Hôtel National in his own carriage, a fine carriage with four horses, an outrider and a valet. Jérôme, who saw him when he drove away, says he must be a prince or a milord."

"Did the carriage have a ducal coronet?" asked Rosalie.

"I don't know," said Mariette. "It was about two o'clock when he came to the house and sent up his card to Monsieur Savarus. When Monsieur saw it Jérôme says he turned as white as a sheet, and told him to show the gentleman up. As Monsieur locked the door after him it was impossible to hear what was said. They were together nearly an hour; then the old gentleman, accompanied by Monsieur, came out and called for his own servant. Jérôme saw this man bring down an

immense package four feet long which looked like a picture, and put it in the carriage. The old gentleman followed with a large bundle of papers in his hand. Monsieur Savarus, as pale as if he was going to die, —he so proud, so dignified! — was in a pitiable state. But he was very respectful to the old gentleman; he could n't have been more so to the king. Jérôme and Monsieur Albert stood at the door of the carriage, which was already harnessed with the four horses, and was driven away just at three o'clock. Then Monsieur went straight to the Prefecture, and from there to Monsieur Gentillet, who sold him the travelling-carriage of the late Madame de Vier; after which he ordered post-horses to be ready at six. Then he came home and packed up some things, and wrote some notes, and sent for Monsieur Girardet, who came and stayed with him till seven o'clock. Jérôme took a note to Monsieur Boucher, where Monsieur Savarus was engaged to dine. Then about half-past seven Monsieur went away, paying Jérôme three months' wages, and telling him to find another place. He left his keys with Monsieur Girardet, with whom, Jérôme says, he went home and got some soup; and after that he got into the carriage more dead than alive, and Jérôme heard him tell the postilion to take the Geneva road."

"Did Jérôme ask the name of the old gentleman at the Hôtel National?"

"Yes, but as he only stopped there an hour or two they had not taken his name. The servants, under orders I dare say, pretended not to speak French."

"Who brought the letter to the Abbé de Grancey which came so late?"

"Probably Monsieur Savarus gave it to Monsieur Girardet to deliver; but Jérôme says that poor Monsieur Girardet, who loved Monsieur Savarus, was nearly as much upset as he was. He who comes in mystery goes in mystery, as Mademoiselle Galard says."

After hearing this account of Albert's departure Mademoiselle de Watteville became so absorbed in her own thoughts that everybody noticed it. It is useless to dwell on the excitement caused in Besançon by the disappearance of the lawyer. It was known that the Prefect had hastened with the utmost courtesy to fill out his passport for foreign parts, which relieved the administration of its only adversary. The next day Monsieur de Chavoncourt was nominated by a majority of a hundred and forty votes.

This strange event strengthened the prejudice felt in Besançon against all strangers. At the end of ten days not a word more was said of Albert Savarus. Three persons only, the lawyer Girardet, the vicar-general, and Rosalie, were seriously affected by his disappearance. Girardet knew that the white-haired old gentleman was the Prince Soderini, for he had seen his card,

and he told this to the vicar-general. But Rosalie, who was far better informed, had known for the last three months of the death of the Duc d'Argaiolo.

At the end of the month of April, 1836, nine months after the above events, no one had heard anything of Albert Savarus. Jérôme and Mariette were thinking of being married, but the baroness told her maid, confidentially, to wait awhile, as the marriage of her daughter would soon take place, and the weddings could be celebrated together.

"It is time to marry Rosalie," she said to Monsieur de Watteville. "She is nearly twenty, and for the last few months she has changed dreadfully."

"I am sure I don't know what is the matter with her," said the baron.

"If fathers don't know what is the matter with their daughters, mothers do," replied the baroness; "she must be married."

"I am willing," said the baron, "and for my share I'll give her Les Rouxey, — now that the court has settled the matter with the township of Riceys. The Riceys people have n't appealed, so the case is ended."

"You seemed never to have guessed," said the baroness, "that the decision not to appeal cost me thirty thousand francs, which I paid to Chantonnit, the mayor. Money was all that peasant wanted, and he

simply sold us peace. If you give away Les Rouxey, you won't have a penny of your own left."

"I don't need much," said the baron. "I sha'n't live long."

"You eat like an ogre."

"Exactly, but the more I eat the weaker my legs get."

"Because you will use that turning-machine."

"I don't know about that," said the baron.

"Well, we must marry Rosalie to Monsieur de Soulas; if you do give her Les Rouxey at least reserve the right to live there. For my part, I will give her fifteen thousand francs a year from the Funds. They can live with us, and I don't think they 'll be unhappy."

"No, I shall give them Les Rouxey outright; Rosalie is fond of Les Rouxey."

"You are very singular in your regard for your daughter. You never ask me if I like Les Rouxey!"

Rosalie was called, and informed that she was to marry Monsieur Amédée de Soulas at the beginning of May.

"I thank you, mamma, and you, papa, for having thought of my establishment," she said; "but I don't wish to marry; I am very happy as I am, here with you."

"Girlish nonsense!" said the baroness; "you are not in love with Monsieur de Soulas, that 's all."

"If you wish to know the truth, I will never marry Monsieur de Soulas."

"Pooh! the 'never' of a girl of twenty!" said Madame de Watteville, with a sour smile.

"The 'never' of a de Watteville," said Rosalie in a significant tone. "My father does not intend, I presume, to marry me without my consent."

"Oh, heavens, no!" said the poor baron, looking tenderly at his daughter.

"Very good," said the baroness, controlling her wrath at being suddenly and unexpectedly braved; "you may take upon yourself, Monsieur de Watteville, the duty of establishing your daughter. But remember, mademoiselle, if you marry against my wishes you will get nothing from me for your establishment."

The quarrel thus begun between Madame de Watteville and the baron, who stood by his daughter, went to such lengths that Rosalie and her father were finally obliged to live the whole summer at Les Rouxey, the hôtel de Rupt being made intolerable to them. It thus became known in Besançon that Mademoiselle de Watteville had positively refused to marry Monsieur le Comte de Soulas.

After Jérôme and Mariette were married they went to live at Les Rouxey, under promise from Rosalie that they should one day succeed Modinier. The baron repaired and restored the Hermitage according to his

daughter's taste. When Madame de Watteville discovered that the cost of these improvements was over sixty thousand francs, and that Rosalie and her father were building greenhouses out of her money, she perceived the leaven of malice in her daughter's mind. Besides this, the baron bought several additional bits of land and a small domain, for all of which he paid about thirty thousand francs. It was told to Madame de Watteville that Rosalie, away from her control, showed all the signs of a strong-minded girl; she studied the means of making Les Rouxey profitable; she rode on horseback about the place; and her father, whom she made both comfortable and happy, complained no longer of his health, grew fat, and accompanied his daughter on all her excursions.

On the occasion of Madame de Watteville's fête-day the vicar-general drove out to Les Rouxey, sent no doubt by the baroness and Monsieur de Soulas to negotiate a peace between the mother and daughter.

"That little Rosalie has brains, after all," they said in Besançon.

The baroness, who was determined not to put herself in the wrong, had paid the eighty thousand francs which her husband and Rosalie had spent on Les Rouxey, and she had also sent her husband a thousand francs a month for their expenses of living. The father and daughter were very willing to go to Besan-

çon for the fête-day, and to remain there till the end of the month. When the vicar-general after dinner drew Mademoiselle de Watteville apart to open the question of marriage, and make her understand, once for all, that she must not any longer think of Albert, of whom no news had been obtained for over a year, Rosalie stopped him short by a gesture. The strange girl took the old abbé by the arm and led him to a bench beneath a clump of rhododendrons, which overlooked the lake.

"Listen, dear abbé, you whom I love as much as I love my own father, for you have shown a true affection for my Albert. The time has come for me to tell you that I have committed crimes in order to be his wife, and that he must be my husband. Read this."

She drew a newspaper from the pocket of her apron, which she gave to the abbé, pointing to an article under the heading, "Florence, May 25th," which read as follows: —

"The marriage of Monsieur le Duc de Rhétoré, eldest son of Monsieur le Duc de Chaulieu, to Madame la Duchesse d'Argaiolo, *née* Princesse Soderini, was celebrated yesterday with great splendor. Numerous fêtes, given in honor of this marriage, will enliven Florence during the coming weeks. The fortune of Madame d'Argaiolo is one of the largest in Italy, the late duke having left her his entire property."

"The woman he loved is married," cried Rosalie. "I separated them."

"You!" exclaimed the abbé, "How did you do it?"

Rosalie was about to reply when the splash of a fall into the water, and a cry from the gardeners interrupted her words. She rose and ran forward, crying out, "Oh, father!" for she saw him nowhere.

In trying to reach a piece of granite, on which he may have seen the print of a shell, for he was studying certain fossil remains, Monsieur de Watteville had gone too near the edge of the bank and lost his balance, falling into the lake at its deepest part, which was just at the foot of the cliff. The gardeners had much difficulty in recovering him from the mud and slime into which he had plunged and was then struggling. As the baron had dined heavily the shock of the fall interrupted his digestion. When he was undressed, cleaned, and put to bed his condition was so evidently serious that two servants were despatched on horseback, one to Besançon for his wife, the other to the nearest physician and surgeon. When Madame de Watteville arrived, eight hours later, with the principal physician of Besançon, Monsieur de Watteville's condition was already hopeless, in spite of the intelligent care of the Rouxey doctor. The shock had produced a serious infiltration of the brain, and the checked digestion assisted in killing the unlucky baron.

This death, which would certainly not have taken place, said Madame de Watteville, if her husband had remained in Besançon, was attributed by her to her daughter's obstinacy; and she now showed a marked aversion to Rosalie, giving way to a grief that was evidently exaggerated, and calling the baron her "dear lamb." The last of the Wattevilles was buried on an islet in the lake, where the baroness erected a gothic monument in white marble, like that said to be for Héloïse in Père-Lachaise.

A month after this event the baroness and her daughter were living in the hôtel de Rupt, in savage silence. Rosalie was a prey to deep distress, which could seek no comfort from without. She reproached herself bitterly for her father's death, and feared another and even greater misfortune, which was certainly her work and hers only. No one, neither the lawyer Girardet nor the Abbé de Grancey, had obtained the slightest clue to Albert's fate. This utter silence terrified her. At last, in a paroxysm of repentance, she felt the need of confessing to the vicar-general the shocking manœuvres by which she had separated Francesca and Albert.

They were very simple, and yet powerful. Rosalie had suppressed all Albert's letters to the duchess; also the letter in which Francesca told her friend that the duke was ill, and informed him that she

could not write again during the time she was engaged in nursing the dying man. Thus, while Albert was occupied in preparing for the election, the duchess had written to him only twice, once to announce the duke's illness, and next to tell him she was a widow, — two noble and sublime letters, which Rosalie had kept. After practising for many nights the girl had succeeded in imitating Albert's handwriting. She suppressed the real letters of the faithful lover and substituted three others, the rough copies of which made the old priest shudder when he read them, so horribly did the genius of Evil appear there in all its perfection. In the first, Rosalie, writing in Albert's name, prepared the duchess for a change in his feelings; and in the last, she replied to the announcement of the duke's death by an intimation of Albert's approaching marriage with Mademoiselle de Watteville. The infernal cleverness with which the letters were written so amazed the vicar-general that he read them twice over. In reply to the last, Francesca, wounded to the heart by the girl who had vowed to kill her rival's love, wrote the simple words, "You are free; farewell."

"The most infamous crimes and the most odious are those which human justice can never reach," said the abbé, sternly. "But God often punishes them in this world; in that lies the meaning of the awful misfortunes which we think inexplicable. Of all the secret

crimes buried in the mysteries of private life, one of the vilest and most dishonoring is that of opening a letter or reading it surreptitiously. Whoever is guilty of that act, no matter who it is nor what reason may have led to the act, has stained his or her character irretrievably. Are you able to feel the truth in that most touching, most divine story of the young page, falsely accused, who carried the letter containing the order for his own death, and made the journey without one hesitating thought, and whom Providence protected and saved — saved miraculously, as we choose to say? Do you know in what that miracle consisted? Virtue has an ægis as powerful as that of innocent childhood. I tell you these things not to admonish you," said the old priest, with deep sadness. "I am not here as your confessor; you are not kneeling at the feet of God. I am a friend, terrified at the prospect of your coming punishment. Alas! what has become of your victim, that poor Albert? Can he have killed himself? There was untold violence beneath that calm exterior. I see now that the father of the Duchesse d'Argaiolo, the old Prince Soderini, must have come to demand the letters and portrait of his daughter. That was the thunderbolt which fell on Albert's head,— he must of course have sought to justify himself, and for that he left Besançon. But why, in fourteen months, have we heard nothing of him?"

"If I marry him he shall be so happy —"

"Happy? he does not love you. You have nothing to give him. Your mother has the deepest aversion to you ever since you made her that savage answer which stabbed her, and will prove your worldly ruin; I mean what you said to her yesterday when she told you that obedience would still repair your wrong-doing, and urged you to marry Amédée. Did you or did you not reply, 'If you love him so much marry him yourself'? Answer, yes or no?"

"Yes," said Rosalie.

"I know her well," said the abbé; "in three months she will be Comtesse de Soulas; she will certainly have children, she will give half her income to her husband, and will reduce your share in the property as much as possible. You will be poor all her life, and she is only thirty-eight years old. All you will have is the estate of Les Rouxey, even supposing your mother agrees to relinquish her rights in it. From the point of view of material interests alone you have mismanaged your life; under that of feeling and sentiment you have ruined it. Instead of coming to your mother —"

Rosalie made a savage motion of her head.

"— to your mother," continued the priest, "and to your religion, which, at the first ill-regulated impulses of your heart, could have enlightened, advised, and

guided you, you chose to follow your own will, ignorant as you were of life, and heeding nothing but your passion."

These words terrified Mademoiselle de Watteville.

"What must I do?" she said.

"To repair your faults, we must first know the extent of the evil you have done," replied the abbé.

"I will write to the only man who is likely to have any information about Albert, —Monsieur Léopold Hannequin, a notary in Paris, who has been his life-long friend."

"Write nothing unless to tell the truth," said the vicar-general. "Give me the real letters and the false ones, make your confession to me in detail as you would to the director of your conscience, asking me for the means of expiating your sin, and relying upon me. I will see what can be done — for, above all things, you must make plain the innocence of that unhappy man to the eyes of her whom he made his god on earth. He has lost his happiness, but he must have his vindication."

Rosalie promised the vicar-general to obey him, hoping that the steps he took would have the result of bringing Albert back to her.

Not long after the confession of Mademoiselle de Watteville a clerk of Monsieur Léopold Hannequin came to Besançon furnished with a general power of

attorney from Albert Savarus. He went, in the first instance, to Monsieur Girardet and requested him to take steps to sell the house which the lawyer had bought for his election. The clerk sold the furniture of the apartment, and with the proceeds paid Monsieur Girardet five thousand francs which he had advanced to Monsieur Savarus on the evening of his inexplicable departure. When Girardet inquired what had become of the brave and noble man in whom he had felt such interest, the clerk replied that no one knew except Monsieur Hannequin, who was deeply distressed by news contained in the last letter he had received from Monsieur de Savarus.

Learning all this, the vicar-general wrote to Monsieur Hannequin, and received the following reply:

"PARIS, October, 1836.

"To MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE GRANCEY,
Vicar-general of the Diocese of Besançon:

"Alas! monsieur, it is beyond the power of any one to bring Albert back to the life of this world; he has renounced it. He is now a novice at La Grande-Chartreuse, near Grenoble. You know, better than I who have just learned it, that all things earthly die on the threshold of that cloister. Foreseeing my visit, Albert had requested the Reverend Father-general to prevent my communicating with him. I know enough of that noble heart to be certain that he is the victim

of some odious plot to me unknown. But, however that may be, the end is irrevocable. Madame la Duchesse d'Argaiolo, now Duchesse de Rhétoré, seems to me to have pushed her cruelty to extremes. When Albert rushed to Belgirate from Besançon she was no longer there, and had left orders which led him to suppose (falsely) that she had gone to London. From London he returned to Italy, and searched for her in many places, — Rome, Naples, Florence. When at last he was able to meet her face to face, it was in Florence at the moment when her marriage was being celebrated. He fainted in the church, and has never been able, even when he lay for a time at death's door, to obtain any explanation from the duchess, who must have had some unknown cause of rancor in her heart.

"For seven months he travelled from place to place on the traces of a cruel woman who made it her pleasure to evade him. He knew neither where nor how to reach her. I saw our poor friend as he passed through Paris after the catastrophe, and if you had seen him as I did, you would have felt with me that no word could be said to him about the duchess without bringing on a crisis in which his reason might give way. If he had known the crime imputed to him he might possibly have found means of justification; but ignorant as he was, what could he do?

Albert is dead — dead to the world. He craved for rest; let us hope that prayer and the deep silence into which he has flung himself may bring him happiness under another form. If you have really known him, monsieur, you will surely pity him, and also pity me his friend.

"Accept, etc., etc."

As soon as Monsieur de Grancey had read this letter he wrote to the Father-general of the Chartreux, and received with his reply the following letter from Albert Savarus: —

"La Grande Chartreuse, November, 1836.

"I recognize your tender soul, my dear, beloved vicar-general, and your ever-youthful heart in all that the Reverend Father-general of our Order has communicated to me. You have indeed understood the only wish that remained in the inmost folds of my heart about the things of this world, — namely, to bring her who has so ill-treated me to do me justice. But in leaving me free to accept your offer of vindication, the Father-general was testing the strength of my vocation. He has had the extreme goodness to tell me this after I had decided to refuse your offer and to maintain an absolute silence as to my conduct. Had I yielded to the temptation of vindicating the man of the world, the seeker for religion would have been rejected by this monastery.

"Is not this enough to show you that I can never

take part in life again? Consequently, the forgiveness which you ask of me for the author of so much woe is fully given, and without one thought of bitterness. I will pray God to pardon that young lady as I pardon her, just as I pray Him to grant a happy life to Madame de Rhétoré. Ah! what matters it whether it be death, or the wilful hand of a young girl frantic to be loved, or the blow of what men call chance — must we not obey God? There are souls which sorrow changes into a vast desert where the Divine voice echoes. Too late have I come to understand the relation between this life and the life before us — my strength is gone. I could not serve in the ranks of the Church militant, and I cast the remnants of my earthly existence, which is well-nigh over, at the foot of the altar. This is the last letter that I shall write. You alone — you who love me and whom I truly love — could have made me break the rule of forgetting all which I imposed upon my soul when I entered the metropolis of Saint-Bruno; but your name is ever in the prayers of

"ALBERT."

"Perhaps it is all for the best," thought the old man.

After communicating this letter to Rosalie, who kissed the passage containing her pardon, the abbé said to her: "Now that he is utterly lost to you, will

you not consent to be reconciled to your mother, and marry the Comte de Soulas?"

"Albert must order me to do so," she replied.

"You see for yourself it is impossible to consult him. Besides, the Father-general would not allow it."

"Could I go and see him?"

"No one can see a Chartreux monk; neither can any woman, except the Queen of France, enter La Grande Chartreuse," said the abbé. "Nothing therefore hinders you from marrying the Comte de Soulas."

"I do not wish to cause my mother's unhappiness," said Rosalie.

"Satan!" cried the vicar-general.

Towards the end of the winter the kind old abbé died, and his friendly offices no longer interposed between the iron natures of Madame de Watteville and her daughter. The event he had predicted took place; the baroness married Monsieur de Soulas in August, 1837, in Paris where she had gone to live by Rosalie's advice, who became very kind to her mother about this time. Madame de Watteville was misled into thinking it was real kindness on her daughter's part, but it was prompted solely by a desire to go to Paris and wreak an atrocious vengeance; Rosalie was determined to avenge Albert by torturing her rival.

Mademoiselle de Watteville was now of age, and

her mother, in order to settle their accounts, had relinquished her rights in Les Rouxey, and the daughter had given the mother a release of all other claims on her father's property. She had also encouraged her mother in marrying the Comte de Soulas and making a settlement upon him.

"Let us each have our liberty," she said.

Madame de Soulas, though somewhat uneasy as to her daughter's intentions, was touched by this apparent generosity, and she made Rosalie a present of six thousand francs a year from the Public Funds, to relieve her conscience. As Madame de Soulas had an immense property in land, and was quite incapable of selling it in order to deprive Rosalie of her legal share, Mademoiselle de Watteville was still an heiress, and she soon took, with her mother, the tone and habits of Paris, where they lived in the great world.

Towards the end of the month of February, 1838, Rosalie, to whom a number of young men were paying assiduous court, was at length able to execute the purpose which had brought her to Paris. Her desire to meet the Duchesse de Rhétoré, to see that remarkable woman and drive her to eternal remorse was gratified. She had taken pains to make herself elegant and coquettish in all her surroundings in order to approach the duchess on a footing of equality. Their first meeting took place at a ball given annually, since 1830, in

aid of the pensioners of the former Civil list. A young man, instigated by Rosalie, pointed her out to the duchess with the remark: "There is a remarkable young girl — very strong-minded. She caused a man of great talent, Monsieur Albert de Savarus, to bury himself in the Chartreuse monastery at Grenoble. She is Mademoiselle de Watteville, an heiress from Besançon."

The duchess turned pale. A look was exchanged between herself and Rosalie, — one of those looks which, from woman to woman, are more deadly than the pistol-shots of a duel. Francesca Soderini, who had suspected Albert's innocence, left the ballroom at once, her informant being little aware of the terrible wound he had inflicted on the stately Duchesse de Rhétoré.

"If you wish to know more about Albert come to the ball at the Opera-house on Tuesday next, holding a marigold in your hand."

This anonymous letter, sent by Rosalie to the duchess, brought the unfortunate Francesca to the ball, where Mademoiselle de Watteville placed in her hands all Albert's letters, the one written by Léopold Hannequin to the vicar-general, and even the one in which she had written her own confession to the abbé.

"I will not be the only one to suffer," she said to her rival; "you have been as cruel to him as I."

After enjoying for an instant the stupefaction visible on the beautiful face of the duchess, Rosalie left the room and never again reappeared in society. She returned to Besançon with her mother.

Mademoiselle de Watteville, living alone on her estate of Les Rouxey, riding on horseback, hunting, refusing two or three suitors a year, and going occasionally to Besançon, being at one time chiefly occupied in making her property productive, was considered an extremely original person, and one of the celebrities of the East.

Madame de Soulas has two children, a boy and a girl; she has grown younger, but young Monsieur de Soulas is considerably older.

"My fortune has cost me dear," he said to his friend de Chavoncourt. "If you want to know what a *dévote* is you must marry her."

Mademoiselle de Watteville does extraordinary things. People say of her, "She is a trifle cracked." She goes, or rather did go, every year to look at the walls of La Grande Chartreuse. Perhaps she was thinking of imitating her great uncle and scaling the walls of that convent as he scaled those of his monastery when he escaped into freedom.

In 1841 she left Besançon with the intention, people said, of being married; but no one really knows the object of her journey, from which she was brought

back in a state which prevented her, forever after, from appearing in society. By one of those apparent chances to which the old Abbé de Grancey had alluded, she was on the Loire in a steamboat when the boiler burst. Mademoiselle de Watteville was so cruelly injured that she lost her right arm and her left leg; her face was so scarred that no trace of comeliness remained, and her health so broken by the shock that she seldom passes a day without suffering. Since then, she has never left the Hermitage at Les Rouxey, where she leads a life which is wholly devoted to her religious duties.